

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum TOP SECRET

TO : J. Stanley Pottinger  
Assistant Attorney General  
Civil Rights Division

DATE: March 31, 1975

FROM : Robert A. Murphy  
Chief  
Criminal Section

RAM:vap

SUBJECT: Martin Luther King, Jr.

TOP SECRET

I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the direction of November 24, 1975 of the Attorney General, a review was undertaken of the files of the Department and the FBI that pertain to Martin Luther King, Jr. The purpose of the review was to make a recommendation as to whether the investigation of the assassination of Dr. King should be reopened. On December 1, you elaborated on the Attorney General's direction and set as goals for the review the answering of two questions: (U)

- 1) What action, if any, was undertaken by the FBI which had or may have had an effect, direct or indirect, on the assassination of Martin Luther King? (U)
- 2) What action, if any, was undertaken by the FBI which had or may have had any other adverse effect, direct or indirect, on Martin Luther King?(U)

At various times you, Mr. Turner and I participated in the review. I saw nothing in the files that I read that indicates any involvement of the FBI in the assassination of Dr. King. However, there was a campaign by the FBI to discredit and to neutralize Dr. King and to remove him from a leadership role in the civil rights movement. There are many examples of improper FBI activity that were directed against Dr. King, his associates and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). (U)

DECLASSIFIED BY J.S. Pottinger  
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION  
SCHEDULE BY EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
EXEMPTION CATEGORY # 2, 3  
AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED ON INDEFINITE

Typed on: 3/31/76  
Classified on: 4/8/75  
Authority: JRS  
270-36-1980

Pursuant to 28 C.F.R. §17.26, portions of this document are reclassified

DATE OF RECLASSIFICATION 12-2-77

TOP SECRET

DECLASSIFIED BY [Signature]



Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

II. METHODOLOGY

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

The first step in our review was to find out the extent of the Bureau's files on Dr. King, his family, associates and relevant organizations. We learned that the relevant files are voluminous. For example, at FBI Headquarters the so-called security investigation of Dr. King consists of 94 sections or volumes, comprising 3967 serials (memoranda); files on SCLC consist of 106 sections of 3249 serials; files captioned Communist Influence in Racial Matters consist of 162 sections of 3767 serials; files captioned Communist Party, USA - Negro Question consist of 49 sections of 2254 serials; files on the assassination investigation consist of 84 sections of 6003 serials; files on Mrs. King consist of three sections of 75 serials; files on (deleted pursuant to 5 U.S.C. §552(b)(7)(C) . . . . .) There are more files on more associates of Dr. King. (u)

There are more FBI files in the various field offices. For example, the Atlanta file of the security investigation of Dr. King consists of 80 sections of 8321 serials; the Memphis file of the assassination investigation consists of 120 sections of 3493 serials, [deleted pursuant to 5 U.S.C. §552(b)(7)(C)] (u)

There are additional FBI files, not included above, such as "subfiles" - usually newspaper clippings, and "junk" files - usually unsanitized memos regarding microphone or telephone surveillance. Additionally, there are more files with hundreds more sections in the Department itself which consist primarily of what the FBI has provided and which, therefore, are sanitized and not as informative as the FBI's files. (u)

Prior to reading any files, we met with those members of the staff of the Church Committee who had been working for several months on matters relating to Dr. King. They advised us that they had found nothing to implicate the Bureau in Dr. King's death. As they put it, they had found "no smoking

UNCLASSIFIED

pistol". However they had found evidence of the Bureau's campaign against Dr. King and, through public testimony, have already publicized that fact. On Monday, March 22, I read the draft of the Committee's report dealing with this matter (u)

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET

Withheld pursuant to 5 U.S.C. §552(b)(1)

(Ts)

TOP SECRET

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

III. KEY PEOPLE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, FBI  
AND SCLC

Robert F. Kennedy was Attorney General from January 21, 1961 to September 3, 1964; Nicholas deB. Katzenbach was either Acting Attorney General or Attorney General from September 4, 1964 to October 2, 1966; Ramsey Clark was either Acting Attorney General or Attorney General from October 3, 1966 to January 20, 1969. During this same period, the Deputy Attorneys General were Supreme Court Justice Byron R. White (January 24, 1961 - April 13, 1962), Katzenbach (May 3, 1962 - February 10, 1965), Clark (February 11, 1965 - March 1, 1967), and Warren Christopher (July 24, 1967 - January 20, 1969). The Assistant Attorney General for Internal Security was D.C. Court of Appeals Judge J. Walter Yeagley. The Assistant Attorneys General for Civil Rights were Burke Marshall (1961-1964), John Doar (1965-1967) and Stephen J. Pollak (1967-1969). (u)

At all relevant times the FBI was headed by J. Edgar Hoover. The Associate Director was Clyde Tolson. Hoover and Tolson are both dead. The Assistant to the Director, responsible for all investigative matters during this period, was Alan H. Belmont. . . . .

[deleted pursuant to 5 U.S.C. §552(b)(7)(C)] . . . . .  
(u)

During this period the Bureau had several operating divisions which were headed by an Assistant Director and a deputy called a number one man. Cartha DeLoach was assistant director in charge of the Crime Records Division. His Number one man was R.E. Wick. DeLoach has retired and has a corporate job. In addition to records work this division handled congressional liaison, White House contacts, public information and press relations. During the Kennedy Administration the principal contact for the Bureau and the Attorney General was Assistant Director Courtney Evans. (u)

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

The major operating division on this matter was the Domestic Intelligence Division headed by Assistant Director William C. Sullivan and number one man Joseph A. Sizoo. Sullivan was later fired and . . . . . [deleted pursuant to (b)(7)(C)] . . . . . Sizoo has retired . . . . . The sections in this division that were involved are the Subversive Control Section, which focused on individual security subjects and the Internal Security Section which focused on organizations and certain key individuals. This section, for example, handled the Smith Act prosecutions. When the bureau first started its coverage of Dr. King, it was handled in Subversive Control; when the investigation was intensified it was transferred to Internal Security (u)

The Subversive Control Section was headed by James Bland whose number one man was Paul Cox. Both are now retired. The Internal Security Section was headed by Fred J. Baumgardner, assisted first by Dick Corman and later by Charles Brennan. Baumgardner is retired, . . . [deleted pursuant to (b)(7)(C)] . . . . . Corman and Brennan are both retired. Within that section the King case was handled initially by William Forsythe (now deceased) and then continuously by [deleted - (b)(7)(C)] unit chief who is still with the Bureau. (u)

The SCLC was headed by Dr. King. His principal associates in SCLC included Rev. Ralph Abernathy, Congressman Andrew Young and Congressman Walter Fauntroy. [ . . . . . (b)(7)(C) . . . . . ] (u)

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

IV. INVESTIGATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING'S DEATH  
BY THE FBI

A. Adequacy of the Investigation

My reading of the assassination investigation leads me to conclude that the Bureau's investigation was comprehensive, thorough and professional. Every conceivable lead seems to have been pursued. Great numbers of persons who were known to dislike blacks were checked out as suspects. All Bureau field offices were put on alert to participate in the investigation and each SAC was held personally responsible for seeing that leads in his area were run down. I have talked with three attorneys who, at various times, had responsibility for monitoring the investigation and all are satisfied that the FBI had nothing to do with Martin Luther King's assassination. (u)

B. Indications of Bureau Involvement in the Assassination

There are none with the exception of the COINTELPRO activity of proposing that a blind memorandum be sent to a Memphis paper to embarrass King into moving into the Lorraine Hotel where he was shot. That has been investigated previously and its purpose is subject to a different interpretation, discussed below (u)

Evidence exists that the FBI was not involved in King's assassination. On April 2, 1968 Attorney General Ramsey Clark turned down an FBI request to tape the telephones of SCLC in Atlanta and Washington to learn about plans for the Poor People's Campaign. This request indicates that the FBI expected no change in SCLC's (and King's) plans. The attempt to discredit King by planting an embarrassing story in the Memphis papers indicates a continuation of the Bureau's campaign against King. Logic suggests that the last thing J. Edgar Hoover wanted was to make King a martyr, thereby enhancing his image. This runs counter to years of effort by the FBI to discredit and neutralize King. Finally, the investigation was so massive and

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

intense that FBI involvement was likely to be discovered, unless one believes that virtually the entire Bureau was corrupted - which I do not. (u)

Finally, even to the present time we investigate allegations that persons other than James Earl Ray may have assassinated King. None of these recent investigations have uncovered any facts which indicate that someone other than Ray was involved. (u)

UNCLASSIFIED

V. FBI'S CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT OR NEUTRALIZE  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

I will set out in a chronological narrative the FBI's interest in, and investigation of, Dr. King. It began as a security investigation to determine whether he was a communist and the extent of communist influence on him. It was corrupted internally by the FBI and largely became an effort to find out facts embarrassing to King that might be used to remove him from a leadership role in the civil rights movement. The attached Report Exhibit should be read in conjunction with this narrative as an aid in recognizing peaks and valleys in the Bureau's campaign against Dr. King. (u)

A. \_\_\_\_\_

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET

exempt pursuant to 5 USC §552(b)(1)

(TS)

TOP SECRET



TOP SECRET

In February 1961 King wrote an article in the Nation regarding the dearth of black federal agents, including FBI agents. The thrust of the article appears to have been an appeal to President Kennedy to issue an Executive Order integrating federal law enforcement agencies. In November Atlanta advised Headquarters that there was no information on which to base a security matter inquiry of King. (u)

B. \_\_\_\_\_

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET

[exempt- 5 USC §552(b)(1)]

(TS)

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET

[exempt- 5 USC §552(b)(1)]

TS

Hoover also sent a memo to the SACs in Atlanta and New York on February 27, 1962. It instructed them to review their files and to prepare a report suitable for dissemination which

TOP SECRET

SECRET

should include all information of a security nature, plus complete background data, on King. No open investigation was to be conducted and all inquiries were to be limited to established sources. The review was ordered, according to Hoover, because of widespread use of King's name by communist front groups and because of King's constant association with Communist Party members. (u)

CLASSIFIED: SECRET

EXEMPT\_ 5 USC §552(b)(1)

(S)

SECRET\_ EXEMPT- 5 USC §552(b)(1)

(S)

SECRET

TOP SECRET

In April, the Atlanta office of the FBI submitted a 37 page monograph on Dr. King which included a statement that information obtained during a three year period ending in September 1961 indicated no communist influence on King or SCLC. On May 10, FBI Headquarters advised the SAC in Atlanta that his conclusion was not consistent with facts mentioned elsewhere in the monograph and instructed him to delete that conclusion from the monograph. The next day, Hoover placed King in Section A of the Reserve Index, labeled Communist. (u)

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET

EXEMPT PURSUANT TO 5 USC §552(b)(1)

(TS)

In June 1962 the SAC in New York sent memoranda to the Bureau reporting that King and [(b)(7)(C)] had met and that [(b)(7)(c)] ..... he speculated about whether the Attorney General might be able to [(b)(7)(c)] ..... This points up an inconsistency in the attitude of the Bureau concerning [(b)(7)(c)]. On one hand, [(b)(7)(c)] was referred to in some Bureau memos as [(b)(7)(c)] ..... In others he was cited as part of the proof of [(b)(7)(c)] ..... The Bureau also reported King's reaction to stories that [(b)(7)(C)] .....

TOP SECRET

He reportedly stated, "No matter what a man was, if he could stand up now and say he is not connected, then as far as I am concerned, he is eligible to work for me." In October 1962, articles appeared in the Augusta, Georgia Chronicle, the St. Louis Globe Democrat and other papers exposing [(b)(7)(C)]..... SCLC connections. The Bureau advises that the article was the result of a COINTELPRO activity. The recommended action was to send public source information to friendly media in those southern states which had universities that King had announced would be targets of efforts at integration. [(b)(7)(C)] resigned in November from SCLC. (u)

In October 1962, the FBI began its security investigation of King. (u)

CLASSIFIED: SECRET

EXEMPT- 5 USC §552(b)(1)

(S)

In late 1962 King publicly criticized the Bureau by stating that agents in the South were southern born and unsympathetic to the civil rights movement and, therefore, unable to protect Negroes or to investigate their claims of police brutality. (u)

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET

EXEMPT- 5 USC §552(b)(1)

TOP SECRET

-- CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET

EXEMPT PURSUANT TO 5 USC §552(b)(1)

i. (TS)

c. \_\_\_\_\_

CLASSIFIED: SECRET

EXEMPT- 5 USC §552(b)(1)

(S)

TOP SECRET

- 14 TOP SECRET

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET- EXEMPT- 5 USC §552(b)(1)

(TS)

CLASSIFIED: SECRET EXEMPT 5 USC §552(b)(1)

(S)

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET  
EXEMPT - 5 USC § 552(b)(1)

TOP SECRET

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET- EXEMPT- 5 USC §552(b)(1)

(TS)

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET- EXEMPT- 5 USC §552(b)(1)

(TS)

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

CLASSIFIED: SECRET....EXEMPT- 5 USC§552(b)(1)

(S)

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET....EXEMPT- 5 USC §552(b)(1)

(TS)

In July Attorney General Kennedy received a memo from the Director reporting a request from Senator Monroney (D-Okla.) for information concerning racial agitation and communist influence in racial matters. (Senator Magnuson (D-Wash.) made a similar inquiry a few days later). The Senator's request was apparently prompted by testimony by Gov. Ross Barnett of Mississippi against an administration public accommodations bill. Barnett had raised the question of communist influence. Two days later Gov. Wallace of Alabama testified in similar fashion.

TOP SECRET



The Director's memo to the Attorney General stated that the Communist Party was not able to assume a leadership role in racial unrest at that time but hoped to exploit the situation [deleted pursuant to (b)(7)(C).....] (u)

On July 16, 1963, Attorney General Kennedy apparently initiated a discussion with his FBI liaison, Courtney Evans, concerning the feasibility of electronic surveillance on Dr. King because of possible communist influence on King. Evans discouraged the Attorney General, weighing the risk of public disclosure against the difficulty of electronically surveilling King who moved about the country so much but stating that a feasibility study could be done. After the Atlanta office reported that electronic surveillance was feasible and secure, the Bureau prepared the necessary authorization papers for a tesur on King's resident or at any future address to which he may move, and for a cesur on SCLC or any future address to which it may move, and sent them to the Attorney General on July 23. On July 25, the Attorney General declined, believing it to be ill advised. (u)

On July 17, 1963, President Kennedy answered a question at a press conference to the effect that there was no evidence that civil rights demonstrations were communist inspired. It was in this same month that the FBI opened an investigative file called "Communist Influence in Racial Matters". On July 18, the Director sent a memo to all SACs instructing them to be alert to any information concerning such influence. The Attorney General said in July that the FBI had no evidence that any civil rights leaders were controlled by Communists. Letters similar in tone were sent to Senators Magnuson and Monroney on July 23. On July 29, Hoover sent the Attorney General an 18 page memorandum captioned: "Martin Luther King: Affiliation with the Communist Movement". [deleted pursuant to (b)(1).....CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET .....] The Attorney General was upset, particularly in view of his recent public statements. He

believed that certain people would feel he was protecting King. He sent the memo back to the FBI demanding documentation of the allegations about King. [ CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET.....

.....EXEMPT- 5 USC (b)(1).....  
.....(TS)

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET- EXEMPT- (b)(1)

(TS)

Also in August 1963, the [deleted pursuant to (b)(7)(C) .....] A conversation between King and an employee of SCLC was overheard as a result of a resur on ... (b)(7)(C) ... home which Attorney General Kennedy had authorized in July at the same time he had refused authorizing on King; [deleted pursuant to (b)(7)(C).....

.....] These conversations were reported to the Department. In the same month, the Bureau overheard a conversation between (b)(7)(C) and Gordon Haskell of the ACLU that the Attorney General or Edward R. Murrow, then head of the USIA, might give King an award on behalf of the ACLU. In an effort to prevent the presentation, Murrow was sent a SECRET letter advising him that Haskell had been elected chairman of the Independent Socialist League about six years previously. TU

It was also in August 1963 that the Domestic Intelligence Division of the FBI, headed by William Sullivan prepared a memorandum analyzing the communist party's efforts to exploit Negroes. The memorandum concluded that the effort was largely unsuccessful but should be closely watched. It stated that the Communist Party regarded King as the most likely vehicle through which it could achieve its goals. It contained no new information about King and did not conclude that he was a communist. (u)

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

Hoover rejected the memo with a sarcastic reminder that the same FBI personnel had once said the same thing about Castro. Sullivan apologized saying the Director was right and he and others were wrong. Sullivan called King the most dangerous Negro in the country from the standpoint of communism, the Negro and national security. The memo disclosed that five people were working full time at Headquarters on the Negro-communist influence question. (u)

In September the substance of more overheard conversations were reported to the Attorney General. It appears that at this time King had stopped talking directly with (b)(7)(C) because of the pressure from the Kennedy administration. However, indications are that King communicated with (b)(7)(C) ... (b)(7)(C) who had now become counsel to King. Indeed, King asked ... (b)(7)(C) this time if his "friend", ... (b)(7)(C) ... understood why King had not called him. King said he wanted to wait until the civil rights debate was over. The Attorney General was advised that (b)(7)(C) was overheard talking with King, (b)(7)(C) and [(b)(7)(C)] about various matters including the Birmingham bombing, a replacement for (b)(7)(C), making money from a record of King's speeches and a forthcoming book of King's. (u)

In September Bureau Headquarters instructed its field offices in Atlanta and New York to do a feasibility study on technical surveillance on King and SCLC in both cities, citing as their justification not only alleged communist influence [ deleted pursuant to (b)(7)(C)..... ] On September 16, Sullivan proposed increased coverage of the Communist Party's efforts to influence Negroes. Hoover rejected the proposal sarcastically saying that it would be a waste of resources in view of the earlier memo of Sullivan's Division. On September 25, Sullivan apologized again and renewed his proposal for intensified coverage. Hoover approved the proposal on October 1, 1963. (u)

UNCLASSIFIED

- 20 -  
CONFIDENTIAL

~~SECRET~~

CLASSIFIED: EXEMPT UNDER (b)(1)

(C) On October 10, 1963 Attorney General Kennedy approved the request on a trial basis (he also approved a tesur on SCLC in New York City at the same time; on October 21, he approved one on SCLC in Atlanta) saying to continue it if productive results and asking to be advised if pertinent information developed on communist connections. Attorney General Kennedy had expressed concern about a tap on King's home from a security standpoint. He told Evans, "the last thing we could afford to have would be a discovery of a wiretap on King's residence". After receiving Evans' assurance of security, Kennedy said that he recognized the importance of coverage if substantial information was to be developed about the relationship between King and the Communist Party. Although the file reflects the coverage was to be evaluated after 30 days because of Kennedy's uncertainty about it, there is no record that the Bureau ever went back to the Attorney General for approval or that Kennedy inquired about the results. However his brother was assassinated soon after the 30 day evaluation was completed. The evaluation was internal and it resulted in a 90 day extension, largely because of information obtained that had nothing to do with communist influence, for example, [deleted- (b)(7)(C)...] SCLC finances and King's travel plans. (u)

Bureau records indicate that seven wiretaps and sixteen microphones were used against King or SCLC over a two year period. (u)

CONFIDENTIAL

UNCLASSIFIED -

~~SECRET~~

Wiretap Surveillance of Dr. King and the SCLC

<u>Location</u>	<u>Installed</u>	<u>Discontinued</u>
King's home	11/8/63	4/30/65
New York City apartment	8/14/64	9/8/64
Hyatt House, Los Angeles	4/24/64	4/26/64
Hyatt House, Los Angeles	7/7/64	7/9/64
Claridge Hotel, Atlantic City	8/22/64	8/27/64
SCLC, Atlanta	11/8/63	6/21/65
SCLC, New York	10/24/63	1/24/64
	7/31/64	7/31/64 (u)

Microphone Surveillance of Dr. King: Jan. 64-Nov. 65

<u>Location</u>	<u>Installed</u>
Willard Hotel, Washington, D.C.	1/5/64
Shroeder Hotel, Milwaukee	1/27/64
Hilton Hawaiian Village, Honolulu	2/18/64
Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles	2/20/64
Hyatt House, Los Angeles	2/22/64
Statler Hotel, Detroit	3/19/64
Senator Motel, Sacramento	4/23/64
Hyatt House Motel, Los Angeles	7/7/64
Monger Hotel, Savannah	9/28/64
Park Sheraton, New York	1/3/65
Americana Hotel, New York	1/28/65
Park Sheraton, New York	3/29/65
Sheraton Atlantic, New York	5/12/65
Astor Hotel, New York	10/14/65
New York Hilton, New York	10/28/65
Americana Hotel, New York	11/29/65 (u)

UNCLASSIFIED

In October the Attorney General was advised that King and (b)(7)(c) again discussed a replacement for (b)(7)(c) and that (b)(7)(c) said he would discuss it with King's "friend". Kennedy was also advised that King had received a telegram from a Russian poet.

In October the Bureau sent to various government officials a monograph captioned: Communism and the Negro Movement - a Current Analysis. It concerned King primarily and contained unfavorable references to him, including personal conduct unrelated to any association with the Communist Party. The Bureau knew it would upset the Attorney General. It did. He ordered all copies recovered. They were. (u)

In November the Bureau had the tesurs in place at King's home and at SCLC Headquarters and they began to overhear King talking [.....(b) (7) (C).....] and recounting past meetings. They also overheard conversations between King and (b)(7)(c) about a forthcoming book and a meeting in New York with ... (b)(7)(c) ... (photographs were taken showing King, ... (b)(7)(c) ... together in New York) and about a fund raising party for King. [ CLASSIFIED: SECRET..... EXEMPT-(b) (1)..... ] (S)

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET.....

EXEMPT- (b) (1).....

TOP SECRET

TOP

- 23 -

TOP SECRET

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET....EXEMPT-(b)(1)

(TS)

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET.....EXEMPT-(b)(1)

(TS)

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET.....EXEMPT\_(b)(1)

TOP SECRET

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET.....EXEMPT-(b)(1)

(TS)

TOP SECRET....EXEMPT-(b)(1)

(TS)

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET- EXEMPT-(b)(1)

(TS)

Returning to December 1963 the Bureau learned through one of the taps that King was going to meet with President Johnson. Hoover approved sending to the White House the monograph about King that had been previously disseminated but recalled by Attorney General Kennedy. Hoover did not advise the Attorney General of his intention. In fact, for some time after President Kennedy's assassination, Hoover communicated directly with the White House and did not always inform the Attorney General of what he was doing (u)

TOP SECRET



Also in December, presumably sensing an opportunity because of a new President to become more aggressive in their effort to discredit King, the Bureau had a one day conference at Headquarters to explore the communist influence in racial matters and to "discuss avenues of approach to exposing King's unholy alliance with the CPUSA". A 21 item working paper was prepared in advance of the meeting. Sullivan characterized King as a "dupe of the communists but also a man of low character". Sullivan prepared a memorandum for his superiors reporting the results of the December 23 meeting. The meeting was attended by two agents from Atlanta, Sullivan and four other men from Headquarters. Sullivan reported that the meeting pointed up the need for further information on six points. Four dealt with SCLC, its money and its personnel. The other two dealt specifically with King and his personal life. Sullivan stated, "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... [We] will expose King for the clerical fraud and Marxist he is at the first opportunity". It was agreed to continue the security investigation of King for ninety days and to give the case priority attention. (u)

#### D. 1964

In January 1964 King was named "Man of the Year" by Time Magazine. On a UPI press release announcing the selection, Hoover wrote: "They had to dig deep in the garbage to come up with this one". On January 8, 1964 a memo was prepared by Sullivan recommending getting King off of his pedestal and replacing him with another of the Bureau's choosing. The idea was endorsed by Hoover. Headquarters told its Atlanta office to start sending daily memos about King. In a follow up to the December 23, 1963 meeting the Bureau began a review of the tax returns for the previous 5 years of King, SCLC and the Gandhi Society; the Director instructed Atlanta to seek information of adverse views of King or SCLC from within the Negro movement, stating these would be good four counterintelligence; (u)

the Director instructed New York to stay alert for tax evasion information on King or his organizations and to provide information of any effort to utilize the media to enhance King's image. Obviously, these instructions pertained to information that might be obtained through tesurs and misurs. (u)

The first microphone surveillances of King occurred in January 1964 at the Willard Hotel. An eight page summary of the tape was prepared and delivered to Walter Jenkins of the White House staff. [deleted pursuant to (b)(7)(C).....] cover rejected a recommendation that the Attorney General get a copy. Sullivan pointed out that Kennedy might reprimand King, thereby foreclosing the possibility of developing similar information. Sullivan said it was important to have such information in order to completely discredit King as a leader of the Negro people. In briefing Jenkins, Cartha DeLoach acknowledged that the Director wanted additional information prior to discussing it with certain friends-meaning, among others, the media. (u)

On January 27, 1964 Sullivan approved another misur at a Milwaukee hotel. The recommending memo pointed out that because police would be nearby, [deleted pursuant to (b)(7)(C).....] Hoover wrote: "I don't share the conjecture....." (u)

The Attorney General was advised that King met in New York with ... (b)(7)(C) ... and others in January. Also in January, [(b)(7)(C)s overheard calling King a "sucker", "ignorant", "inexperienced", a "bad writer" and "without business sense". (u)

On January 17, 1964 Headquarters approved discontinuance of the coverage at SCLC in New York because of the office's inactivity. Coverage was to be reconsidered if the office became active. Hoover testified before the House Appropriations

SECRET

Committee in January and made some off-the-record remarks about King and the communist influence in the racial movement, which caused a public furor when they were discussed in a Joseph Alsop newspaper column in April. (u)

CLASSIFIED: SECRET.....EXEMPT- (b)(1)

..(s)

On February 12, 1964 the Director in a memo to the Atlanta office, referred to a conversation in which [ deleted pursuant to (b)(7)(C).....] Hoover instructed Atlanta to be alert to [-(b)(7)(C)....] for counter-intelligence purposes. He indicated he wanted to capitalize on it and welcomed suggestions as to how it could be done. (u)

On February 13, 1964, Assistant Attorney General Burke Marshall sent files to the White House concerning King, [(b)(7)(C)]

SECRET

UNCLASSIFIED

SECRET

[... (b) (7) (C) ...] He made particular reference to a September 1963 memo he sent to the Director concerning his, Marshall's, conversation with King in which he provided King with specific information about [... (b) (7) (C) ...]. Marshall wanted President Johnson to know of King's background. He did not know that the Bureau had been providing the White House with such information. DeLoach sent Hoover a memorandum about Marshall's letter and a meeting DeLoach had with Bill Moyers and Walter Jenkins about the letter. He reported that the White House mistrusted Attorney General Kennedy's motives in providing the files. Personal marginalia written on the memo by Hoover indicates his dislike of Marshall and Deputy Attorney General Katzenbach. (u)

In response to information about a rumored plot to assassinate King, Headquarters sent Atlanta a memo on the eighteenth stating that the Bureau was to be advised promptly of information concerning violence to be directed against King. Finally in February the Director advised the New York and Atlanta offices to gather all previous references to King's forthcoming book and put them in one memorandum so that the Bureau could take some action in counterintelligence or otherwise "to discredit King or otherwise neutralize his effectiveness because of communist influence on him." (u)

King met on February 29 with [... (b) (7) (C) ...] in New York City. (u)

When King went to Hawaii in February, agents from San Francisco were sent to the island to install microphones in his hotel. Sullivan justified the installation as an attempt to obtain facts about King [... (b) (7) (C) ...] so that ... might be used against him. (u)

In March 1964, conversations continued to be intercepted and reported. Also in March King was approached by two people in government: one was an invitation from Sargent Shriver to consult on a poverty study being done by OEO; the other was a

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

- 29 -

~~SECRET~~

discussion with a member of the State Department (friend of the Kennedy's) about King's participating in a civil rights memorial for President Kennedy. Among the comments on the Bureau memo about these contacts were that it was shocking, in view of Attorney General and White House knowledge of King's Communist Party connections, that it was disturbing, particularly because King was "...an individual so fraught with evil." (u)

On March 4, it was recommended to Sullivan and approved by Hoover that the Attorney General be given the results of the Willard Hotel misur and more recent misurs in Hawaii and Los Angeles. Evans was to tell the Attorney General that King shouldn't be told of the information. He was provided the information now because Berl Bernhard was scheduled to interview King in connection with a possible memorial to President Kennedy and it was thought that the Attorney General might cancel the interview. The White House was also provided with the more recent information. (u)

On March 9, 1964 (b)(7)(C) met with King in Atlanta. In March, the Bureau proposed and carried out several significant actions against King. They installed a misur on Sullivan's authorization in a Detroit hotel where King was staying. After learning that Marquette University was going to award King an honorary degree, Hoover approved having the SAC in Milwaukee give the Chancellor of the University a monograph about King that cited his communist party connections and referred to his being a moral degenerate. Marquette had previously honored Hoover and the Bureau memo that recommended this action thought it was "shocking" that the University would also honor King. (u)

(b)(7)(C) . . . ., whom King was considering adding to his staff, attended a party in New York at the Soviet Mission. As a counterintelligence activity, the FBI provided the New York Daily News with this information for a news article which was published. The Director turned down a request of Representative Smith of Virginia for information about . . . (b)(7)(C) . . . .

UNCLASSIFIED

SECRET

with the notation, "not now". King was photographed by the FBI  
in Los Angeles with an aide and

(u)

CLASSIFIED: SECRET.....EXEMPT- 5 USC §552(b)(1)

(s)

In April 1964, DeLoach briefed Senator Saltonstall (Mass.)  
and Springfield College President Glenn Olds (now President  
of Kent State University) about King in an unsuccessful effort  
to prevent the awarding of an honorary degree. Also in April  
Joseph Alsop published the article concerning King, communist  
connections, and Hoover's January testimony concerning communist  
influence on racial matters. King responded by criticizing the  
Bureau's concern with communism and not with racial problems (u)

CLASSIFIED: SECRET.....EXEMPT- (b)(1)

SECRET

SECRET

CLASSIFIED: SECRET.....EXEMPT \_ 5 USC §552(b)(1)

On April 23, 1964 Sullivan authorized a misar on King in Los Angeles and one in Sacramento. Also in April Hoover approved permitting the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research to read the "recalled" monograph about King. The White House and Attorney General were told that King, in a near intoxicated state, said he was going to go on a hunger strike in D.C. and die unless the Civil Rights Bill was passed. Attorney General Kennedy was advised that King had refused to debate Malcolm X. King confused the Director when, for unknown reasons, he had his secretary advise the FBI he was going to give a speech in the Philadelphia area. Apparently this was the first time King had told the Bureau of his plans and the Director wanted to know why. In later months and years, King usually told the Bureau of his travel plans (u)

The pace of Bureau activity concerning King then seems to have slackened for a few months. In fact, in May 1964 the Atlanta office was told to leave personal material about King only in intra-Bureau communications and not in anything that might be disseminated. However, the New York office was directed to canvass New York banks to find any accounts of King. An updated profile of King was prepared in May and served as the justification for keeping King in Section A of the Reserve Index because of "subject's position as President of SCLC and he continues to be controlled by Communists." The summary of the profile originally contained a statement that King "...

CLASSIFIED: SECRET.....EXEMPT- 5 USC §552(b)(1)

(s)

In May 1964 King repeated an earlier criticism of the FBI's concern with communist influence on him and the racial

SECRET



UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

movement by saying that the Bureau should be more concerned with such things as bombings against black people. Also in May, the Director congratulated the Atlanta office for some investigative work that appeared to indicate (b)(7)(G) prepared a letter for King in February. Headquarters considered this a most important development which showed continuing ties between (b)(7)(C) and King. On May 18, Headquarters told New York to update their information on O'Dell. (u)

In June 1964, a New York attorney, Harry Wachtel, seems to have become an advisor to King. In the White House, Lee White, later to become Chairman of the Federal Power Commission, had become the liaison with King and civil rights groups. When his name appeared, Hoover asked, "What do we know about Lee White?" He was provided with background information that same day. On June 3 and 4, 1964 the White House and the Attorney General respectively were given double or triple hearsay information about [.....(b)(7)(C).....]

.....] On June 8, Headquarters sent another memo to various field offices reminding them to be "...extremely alert to any and all information available bearing upon the matter of [.....(b)(7)(C).....] We should be alert to any situation which might merit exploitation by the Bureau at the proper time..." Significantly, however, on the eleventh, Headquarters sent a memo to field offices in Jacksonville (St. Augustine was the scene of civil rights demonstrations at that time), Atlanta and New York emphasizing the necessity of advising local police officials, military and secret service personnel whenever the Bureau received information concerning a threat to King's life. The memo indicated it would be embarrassing to the Bureau if there were claims of inaction or delay concerning such threats. (u)

On June 12, 1964 Sullivan prepared a memo for Alan Belmont, telling of Sullivan's meeting with a Dr. Espy, the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Christ. Dr. Espy wanted to know of King's communist ties. Sullivan told him of that and of King's personal life. In the memo, Sullivan wrote, "I think that we have sowed an idea here which may do some good." (u)

UNCLASSIFIED



UNCLASSIFIED

33 -

~~SECRET~~

In July, an internal Bureau memo justified the continuance of tesurs previously authorized on King. On July 17, the White House (Jenkins), at Hoover's direction, was given a descriptive summary of [.....(b)(7)(C).....] The Attorney General was not. (u)

In mid-July King was to appear in Greenwood, Mississippi shortly after it was learned that three civil rights workers were missing in the Philadelphia, Mississippi area. Hoover did not want to afford protection to Dr. King and he spoke separately with the President and the Attorney General. The President finally told Hoover he wanted the FBI to be with King and to make a statement that they would investigate violations of federal law in that regard. (u)

On July 23, while listening to King's telephone, the Bureau heard of a report of plans to kill King. The rumor was checked with negative results. The Bureau was provided with a report of checks drawn in June from King's New York bank account. The Bureau briefed Congressman Pucinski of Illinois of some of King's background. And on July 29, 1964 King was overheard telling [..(b)(7)(C)..] he did not think he should speak in Harlem or Bedford - Stuyvesant (where there had been racial rioting) because the "...communists groups would do everything they could to discredit me". (u)

In August and September 1964, Hoover approved proposals to have an ASAC in New York try to get Cardinal Spellman to prevent the Pope from granting an audience to King, to have DeLoach go to former Eisenhower Press Secretary James Hagerly to prevent ABC from doing a television biography of King, and to have DeLoach go to the Chairman of the Board of Curtis Publishing Company which published the Saturday Evening Post to prevent the publishing of an article by King in the magazine. According to Bureau memos, although the Cardinal was "gratified that the Director thought enough of him" to convey the information, the audience was granted. Hoover wrote, "astounding" on two news articles which reported the audience. On a third, he wrote "I am amazed that the Pope gave an audience to such a degenerate." (u)

UNCLASSIFIED

TOP SECRET

CLASSIFIED: EXEMPT- (b) (1)

(c)

Attorney General Kennedy resigned in September and he gave Courtney Evans the material about King's hotel activities provided him on two earlier occasions by the FBI. Kennedy did not want the material in Department of Justice files and he recommended that the FBI destroy it. Hoover refused to do so and directed that it be retained in a secure location. (u)

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET- EXEMPT-(b) (1)

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

CLASSIFIED: TOP SECRET....EXEMPT=(b) (1)

(TS)

When King was overheard telling (now Congressman) Walter Fauntroy he was not sure he would attend a "get out the vote" meeting of clergymen in New York because of Cardinal Spellman's conservatism, Hoover wrote, "Have (SAC) Malone alert the Cardinal." (u)

In October 1964, James Bland of the FBI recommended that the tesur be kept on King's home. On October 11, two more internal Bureau memos defined the procedure to follow when the FBI was notified about threats on King's life. The Bureau was to notify the Atlanta police and appropriate local police, as well as federal agencies. The FBI would not notify King, leaving that to local police. Headquarters instructed Chicago to check on a possible account of King's at a Chicago bank. Eight days later, Chicago recommended against the attempt because they had no established sources in this "Negro bank in a Negro neighborhood." Hoover wrote, "Shameful!" on two news articles, one announcing King winning the Nobel Peace Prize and one, an editorial, praising King and the civil rights movement. (u)

The FBI stepped up its campaign against King during the next three months in probable reaction to his getting the Nobel Prize. By this time Nicholas deB. Katzenbach was acting Attorney General. On the third of November, Hoover advised the White House and the Acting Attorney General of King's forthcoming Saturday Evening Post article but he said nothing about his attempt to prevent its publication. On November 5, a telephone conversation between (X) and King was overheard by the FBI. In the conversation, (b) (7) (C) was referred to by both men as ..(b) (7) (C)..... pointed out that (b) (7) (C) had abided by earlier decisions but now they were not in the same situation as they were with the Kennedy Administration and that the Civil

TOP SECRET

Rights Act had been passed. He said that (b)(7)(C) wanted to meet with King. King said that the matter could be discussed in a forthcoming meeting in New York and that, "...after the election, it would be a new situation". The White House and Acting Attorney General were advised of this information. (u)

CLASSIFIED: EXEMPT UNDER (b)(1)

(c)

On November 12 information was given to the [ (b)(7)(C) ] ..... in the hope that the paper would expose King's possible and prospective [ ..... (b)(7)(C) ..... ]  
(u)

The State Department asked for security information about King because of the Oslo trip. On November 13, in a memo to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Security, the Bureau discussed only [ ... (b)(7)(C) ... ] He was called [ ..... (b)(7)(C) ..... ]  
..... ] Also on the 13th, the Legat in London was told to advise the U.S. Ambassadors to England and Norway of King's background in an effort to forestall embassy receptions for King. (u)

On November 16, 1964, a memo was prepared which pulled together recent information indicating "further evidences of the influences in high places which Martin Luther King, Jr., and his associates are able to wield." On the 18th, Hoover

CONFIDENTIAL

SECRET

met with a delegation of several women reporters. On the record, he called King "a notorious liar". Hoover's remark caused a sensation. Off the record, Hoover said of King: "He is one of the lowest characters in the country". Later one of these reporters apparently asked to cover a proposed meeting between Hoover and King. Hoover wrote on the memo reporting the request, "I have no appointment with King and I do not intend to make one" (u)

On November 19, 1964, Frederick J. Baumgardner sent a memo to Sullivan reporting a discussion between Wachtel and Rustin as to how to respond to Hoover's "liar" statement. The memo indicated that an investigation was being conducted to determine Wachtel's connection with the communist movement. In a rather lengthy observation, Baumgardner wrote: (u)

"The significant thing involved here is not that these individuals have jumped quickly to King's defense, but rather that they are seizing the opportunity, in line with a long-held communist objective, to launch a campaign to oust the Director as head of the FBI. (u)

The important thing at this point is to follow this matter closely to determine the degree to which King follows their advice in regard to issuing the statement prepared by Wachtel for we will then have further evidence of the extent to which King is being used by communist sympathizers in support of communist objectives." (u)

CLASSIFIED: SECRET...EXEMPT UNDER (b)(1)

SECRET

SECRET

CLASSIFIED: SECRET....EXEMPT UNDER (b)(1).....

(S)

King sent Hoover a telegram responding to the Director's calling him a "notorious liar". On November 20, it was recommended that Hoover ignore it. Hoover wrote: "OK. But I can't understand why we are unable to get the true facts before the public. We can't even get our accomplishments published. We are never taking the aggressive but allow lies to remain unanswered". A new 51 page profile of King was prepared on the 23rd. On the same day, Sullivan authorized the State Department to brief the USIA security officer about King. The security officer then requested supporting data so that he could dissuade USIA from sponsoring King on a trip through Europe, Africa and the Near East. Belmont approved disseminating the information (u)

CLASSIFIED: SECRET....EXEMPT UNDER (b)(1).....

(S)

On November 27, 1964, Roy Wilkins requested and was granted a meeting with DeLoach after Hoover had given a speech at Loyola University in Chicago in which he referred to "sexual degenerates" in civil rights groups. According to a memorandum prepared by DeLoach of the meeting, Wilkins asked that the FBI not ruin King because that would ruin the civil rights movement.

SECRET

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

The memo states that Wilkins said he would try to get King to retire. DeLoach wrote that he chastized Wilkins for his comments about Hoover and the FBI. He said he warned Wilkins that if King wanted a war with the FBI, they had the ammunition and would win. Wilkins was reported as saying he knew King was a liar and had sympathies toward the communist movement. Hoover sent a letter to President Johnson about the meeting. (u)

On November 30, permission was given to the Legat in London to brief U.S. Ambassadors in Sweden and Denmark about King. On the same day King asked (b)(7)(c) to discuss his five minute acceptance speech with ... (b)(7)(c) ... He also said he was going to ask Andy Young and Harry Wachtel to write a 5 minute speech each (u)

Andrew Young called DeLoach on December 1, 1964 and requested a meeting between King and the Director. Young said that King wanted to talk about the future and not the past. DeLoach said he told Young that the "...crusade of defamation against Mr. Hoover and the FBI... [the] campaign of slander and defamation against the Director and the FBI..." by King and his organization behind "our" backs, must be dropped. Hoover and King met in Hoover's office on December 1. DeLoach sat in on the meeting and wrote a 10 page memo to Mohr about the meeting. One and one half pages covered what King said; the rest covers what Hoover said. This may actually represent the relative amounts of conversation. King was overheard (by a tap) talking to a reporter and to Harry Wachtel and he told them that he had spoken for 10 minutes and Hoover had spoken for 45-50 minutes. During the meeting King said he could never be a communist and he referred to his removal of ... (b)(7)(c) ... Hoover covered many subjects, including FBI infiltration of the Klan, upgrading of local police, psychoneurotic tendencies of Gov. Wallace, assignment of northern agents to the South, some cases, Selma, that Aubrey Lewis (a black man) was an agent, that there were 10 or 11 Indian agents and "Mexican-blooded" agents, and that the Bureau couldn't lower its standards just because of color. He gave King some advice: register Negroes

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED<sup>40</sup> -

and educate Negroes in certain skills. Hoover said he was in favor of equality in schools and restaurants but against busing. He mentioned a shoeshine boy in Florida whom he knew who was a doctor. He told King to advise him of any bias or prejudice by an agent. He told King that agents investigate and do not provide protection. He concluded by talking about how good agents were with guns. (u)

On the same day DeLoach met with James Farmer at Farmer's request. It was similar to DeLoach's meeting with Wilkins. (u)

Hoover memorialized a call he had from Katzenbach who had inquired about the meeting with King. He told Katzenbach that King was a persuasive speaker. Katzenbach answered by saying that's all he could say about King. Hoover told Katzenbach that King and Abernathy praised the Bureau and that he (Hoover) had "taken the ball away from King" at the beginning of the meeting. Hoover sent a letter to President Johnson and described the meeting as most amicable. (u)

On the same day, Joseph Sizoo of the FBI sent Sullivan a memo suggesting that selected Negro leaders come to the FBI on the pretext of learning the facts about what the FBI was doing under the Civil Rights statutes. They then would be told of King's background in an effort to have him removed. The White House would not be advised. The suggestion appears to be a follow-up to DeLoach's meeting with Wilkins in late November. The idea apparently did not get beyond Sullivan and was not executed. (u)

On December 2, 1964, the Bureau observed press reaction to the meeting. A columnist who took Hoover's side was sent a letter of appreciation; a TV commentator who said King had "turned the other cheek" by seeking the meeting was sent nothing. On the third, the Bureau was advised by a police officer who was assigned to protect King in Cincinnati that King had told

UNCLASSIFIED



UNCLASSIFIED<sup>41</sup> -

~~SECRET~~

him he had no controversy with Hoover; that he did not want to become involved in any controversy with Hoover; that he would be a "fool" to become so involved; and that he would, therefore, avoid press conferences. (u)

On December 4, 1964 Wachtel told King that Nelson Rockefeller might contribute \$250,00 to King and that Rockefeller had invited King to lunch. On December 11, Headquarters sent material to Albany for former SAC Cornelius to brief Rockefeller about King's background. This action revealed that the Bureau had not changed its attitude about King as a result of King's meeting Hoover. (u)

Also on December 4, 1964, Moyers called DeLoach and said that he and the President felt that an updated 13 page monograph on King should be disseminated to appropriate government officials if it was in the interest of internal security. It had been sent to the White House about two weeks previously with a request that Moyers advise whether it should be disseminated. It was sent to Justice, State and Defense Departments, CIA, USIA, and military intelligence officers on December 7. On December 10, after Hoover approved it, DeLoach briefed two members of the Baptist World Alliance about King's background in an effort to forestall an invitation for King to speak to the group. DeLoach had given a similar briefing six months earlier to the Associate General Secretary of the Alliance. Hoover had disapproved a proposal to permit the Associate General Secretary and another to listen to tapes of King. (u)

On December 10, 1964 Wachtel advised King that Attorney General Katzenbach had called Jack Greenberg of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to discuss "clearing" some one for the Fifth Circuit. King said he would back whomever Greenberg wanted. Hoover wrote on the memo: "This is shocking". The information was forwarded to the White House and the Acting Attorney General. (u)

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

Also on December 10, after some internal discussion over whether the Willard tapes should be completely transcribed, DeLoach said: "I fully agree that this work should eventually be done, particularly if an additional controversy arises with King. I see no necessity, however, in this work being done at the present time inasmuch as the controversy has quieted down considerably and we are not in need of transcriptions right now. ...hold off... until there is an actual need". Hoover wrote: "I think it should be done while it is fresh in the minds of the specially trained agents. "H". It was done. (u)

On December fourteen, Baumbardner characterized a proposal by SCLC to put pressure on white businesses to support a homecoming for King's return from Norway as: "Sad commentary on tactics..." On the same day Headquarters was provided with a listing of checks drawn on King's New York account and the SAC in New York was instructed to uncover any possible paramour of King's on Long Island. Also on the 14th Sullivan proposed to Belmont that letters be sent to the White House and the Acting Attorney General in response to an editorial critical of Hoover and to a proposal by SCEF to send letters critical of Hoover to the White House. Sullivan characterized the SCEF proposal in terms of a conflict with King. (u)

It is evident from the enclosed... that it will be given widespread dissemination. This just highlights what to me is an indisputable fact and that is this Bureau has not yet emerged victorious in its conflict with Martin Luther King. I think we are deluding ourselves if we believe that King and his followers and supporters around the country have run for cover and are not attacking the FBI in one way or another. In view of this situation, realism makes it mandatory that we take every prudent step that we can take to emerge completely victorious in this conflict. We should not take any ineffective or halfway measures, nor blind ourselves to the realities of the situation. (u)

UNCLASSIFIED

- 43 -  
**UNCLASSIFIED**

~~SECRET~~

On December seventeen, Hoover sent a letter to Moyers

.....  
.....(b) (7) (C)..... Apparently  
.....  
.....

..... On the nineteenth the monograph about King was sent to the Director of the National Science Foundation in an effort to stop them from using SCLC as a recruiter of black applicants for southern schools in their scholarship program. (u)

On December 21, 1964, NSF's Director, Leland Haworth, was sent more information about King's personal life by Hoover. [ .....(b) (7) (C).....

.....] On the twenty-first, Katzenbach was advised by Hoover of an incident which was said to have occurred several years before in Memphis during a Negro Baptist Convention. [.....(b) (7) (C).....

.....] That information ..... was sent to various government officials this day. (u)

On December 29, 1964, Headquarters was advised by Atlanta of two conversations involving Coretta King, one with King's secretary and one with Andrew Young. They discussed King's mental state, his rambling conversations in New York, an attempted fight with Abernathy in London and the Hoover conflict. They discussed how King might be relieved of some pressures. The transmission from Atlanta noted: "The above information is being furnished for the Bureau's information to acquaint the Bureau how shaken Dr. King has become as a result of recent events and as a further indication of an area where he may be vulnerable to further pressures". [.....(b) (7) (C).....

.....  
.....  
..... (u)

**UNCLASSIFIED**

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

E. Early 1965

On January 5, 1965, Atlanta advised Headquarters that King was becoming more and more upset, that he blamed the FBI and felt his phone was tapped. On the same day a report was made on the previously ordered review of King's writings and books in an effort to detect possible communist influence. The conclusion was that there were certain parallels but no casual link. On January 6, New York was directed to discreetly cover King in New York by physical and electronic surveillance because he might meet a woman there. The memo indicated, "security is paramount". Also on the sixth the SAC in Atlanta called the Bureau and reported that the wire-taps indicated that King was very nervous and upset and was not sleeping well. He believed the Bureau had his phone tapped. King said a tape and letter which referred to the . . . (b)(7)(C) . . . had been sent to his home and his wife had read the letter. King said: "They are out to break me". The SAC knew nothing of the tape. King said in a tapped conversation that he needed to talk with Hoover or DeLoach. (u)

The so-called-(b)(7)(C) . . . had actually been mailed in late November 1964 by Lish Whitson, a former agent who flew to Florida at Sullivan's instructions. Sullivan had previously told [ . . . (b)(7)(C) . . . ] to keep the microphone tapes together. Phillips was told to give some of the tapes to John Matter of the lab. He now thinks he . . . (b)(7)(C) . . . . . When Matter returned the tapes, there was a composite added. Sullivan had [(b)(7)(C)] get him non-watermarked stationery. Sullivan took the tapes and the stationery and later gave [(b)(7)(C)] a package to deliver to Whitson. The tape was accompanied by a letter advising King that . . . . . (b)(7)(C) . . . . . Apparently King did not listen to the tape until he returned from Oslo. His wife is supposed to have listened to it also. (u)

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED<sup>45</sup> -

~~SECRET~~

On January 6, 1965, Atlanta advised Headquarters and New York that King had been resting at a house and only about two people knew about it. While he was sleeping [..(b)(7)(C)..] fire trucks arrived but there was no fire. King believed the FBI sent the trucks. He believed that either the FBI or the Georgia Bureau of Investigation was tapping his phone. He said that Abernathy had received anonymous calls. He talked about the tape that had been mailed and wanted Young and Abernathy to see Hoover. "They are out to get me, harass me, break my spirit." He said that they must go to Hoover as there just wasn't any privacy. "What I do is only between me and my God." (u)

On January 7, 1965, an internal FBI memo proposed that letters be sent to the White House and the Acting Attorney General about King's condition. The memo referred to the taps, harassment and a forthcoming meeting between King and the Director. The letters were sent to the White House and the Acting Attorney General on the eighth but they mentioned only King's becoming emotionally upset, his use of medication, [.....  
.....(b)(7)(C).....  
.....]

There was no mention of the taps and harassment. (u)

At about this time, an aide of King's called Congressman Diggs and asked for advice about how to deal with Hoover. Diggs suggested seeing Hoover with ministers and telling him that the Bureau's harassment of King was immoral. The Bureau noted that Diggs referred to Hoover as "old man" and "Big Daddy", and mentioned the existence of Hoover's files. Hoover wrote: "And I thought DeLoach had commitment from Wilkins and Farmer that King would cease any further attacks on FBI. Yet King is spear heading this present agitation against FBI" (u)

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

January 8, 1965, Young called DeLoach and requested a meeting with Hoover or DeLoach. It was set for January 11. DeLoach told Mohr that Young would be told on the eleventh that the Director was out. He suggested that he and Leinbaugh meet with Young. Hoover approved. Leinbaugh was the originator of the Lorraine Hotel COINTELPRO activity. (u)

On January 7, 1965, a report from two NAACP contacts in Memphis said King ' [.....(b)(7)(C).....] ..... ] These contacts were being developed as part of an FBI program, "Liaison with Groups Sponsoring Integration". On the same day, Headquarters received a report of checks drawn on King's New York bank in November 1964. (u)

January 8, 1965, Milton Jones of the FBI gave DeLoach an Italian magazine article about King's trip to Europe. The article is very racist in tone; the editor of the magazine had been a Fascist. It was read by Hoover. Jones forwarded the article with a note: "It appears the article... contains excellent public source material for our contacts in this country who would be interested in the true background of Martin Luther King." (u)

Joseph Sizoo advised Sullivan on January 8 that he had authorized misurs in King's and Young's hotel rooms in New York. On the tenth a three page memorandum was prepared from the products of the microphones. King, and perhaps Young and Bernard Lee, an SCLC aide, discuss phone taps and information the Bureau had and how DeLoach and Hoover should be approached. Some mention was made of Joe Rauh and the Bureau characterized him as being associated with communist causes and as being critical of the Bureau. The bugs also recorded King characterizing the mailing of the tape as, "God's out to get you", and as a warning from God that King had not been living up to his responsibilities in relation to the role in which history had cast him. [.....(b)(7)(C).....] (u)

On January 11, 1965 DeLoach sent Mohr an extraordinary memo about his (and Leinbaugh's) meeting with Abernathy and Young. DeLoach said Abernathy could not "cope" and that Young had to take over the conversation. Both were said to be unable to bring themselves to talk directly about King's personal life but kept alluding to it. DeLoach took obvious delight in their discomfort. When Young asked what could be done to protect SCLC from communist infiltration, DeLoach told him to go to HUAC for information because FBI files were confidential. On at least two other points, DeLoach lied to them: he told Abernathy that SCLC's funds were of no concern to the FBI; and, he said the FBI had taken no action on rumors regarding King's personal life. (u)

On January 12, 1965, ]..(7)(C) ..... discussed a meeting .....had attended with King and others to talk about Mississippi. Also on the twelfth a proposal was made to attempt to stop St. Peter's College from giving King an honorary degree. The idea was scrapped because the FBI didn't know anyone at St. Peter's well enough. [.....(b)(7)(C).....  
.....  
.....] (u)

On January 19, 1965, Headquarters sent a memo to Denver instructing agents to cover King's actions while in the area to give a speech but not to embarrass the Bureau. King had been assaulted while in Selma and there were news photos of the attack. [.....(b)(7)(C).....  
.....] On January 21, Headquarters told Atlanta to [..(b)(7)(C).....]. Also on the twenty-first, Sullivan sent Belmont a memo of his meeting with Ralph McGill, Publisher of the Atlanta Constitution, who had been told by the Bureau about King's personal life. McGill said he was concerned and wanted to get King out of the Civil Rights movement. He said he had been talking with Adlai Stevenson, Bill Moyers, Ralph Bunche and Harry Ashmore about it. Hoover sent a letter forwarding McGill's views to President Johnson. (u)

CONFIDENTIAL

In December 1967, King was preparing a taped series of lectures for Canadian radio. The Director instructed the Legat in Ottawa to determine who made the arrangements, including financing, for the series. The justification was to find the source of funds to finance a "new program... of massive civil disobedience demonstrations which may result in riots". The Director was referring to the Spring Project in which King had threatened continuing demonstrations until Congress passed a program designed to help blacks (u)

It also referred to King's statements about Viet Nam and the Spring Project. (c)

The primary concerns of the Bureau relating to Dr. King at this time were his anti-Viet Nam statements and his planned Washington Spring Project which later became the Poor People's Campaign. On December 7, 1967 the Bureau alerted various field offices and told them to develop ghetto informants, if they had none, and to report weekly on plans for the Project. On December 20, 1967 an updated monograph of King was prepared. CLASSIFIED: EXEMPT UNDER (b) (1).....

F. Early 1967-1968

Selected memoranda between February 1965 and December 1967 indicated that the Bureau continued its campaign to discredit and neutralize King. In February 1965 Atlanta was reprimanded for not forwarding information about King quickly enough. In February the Bureau proposed to seek Cardinal Spellman's help in preventing the Davenport, Iowa Catholic Inter-racial Council from giving King an award. Hoover said no. But in March, Gov. Wolfe of Massachusetts was briefed by the FBI about King's background in an effort to tone down "Martin Luther King Day" (u)

On January 25, 1965, Atlanta requested a 90 day extension of the misur on King's house. On the twenty-sixth, Sizoo advised Sullivan he had authorized misurs of King for two days at a hotel in New York because of the potential for developing intelligence information. (u)

~~SECRET~~

CONFIDENTIAL



UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

On January 3, 1968 Attorney General Ramsey Clark turned down a Bureau request to tap SCLC. In January Senator Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) attempted to enlist DeLoach's assistance in preparing a speech for Byrd to deliver in Congress to help King meet his "Waterloo" before the Spring Project. DeLoach refused. Other January memos dealt principally with the Project. (u)

In February 1968, the Bureau learned that King had met in Washington with H. Ralph Brown and Stokely Carmichael to discuss the Project. King was angry that the two might attempt to foment violence. On February 20, 1968, at the request of the White House, the Bureau interviewed a former baseball player. The ball player apparently had no respect for King; [.....  
.....(b) (7) (C).....  
.....] (u)

Hoover approved another updating of King's monograph, to be completed by March 14, 1968 so that it could be disseminated to government officials before the Spring Project to remind them of "the wholly disreputable character of King". It was also recommended and approved to advise the White House and the Attorney General of the involvement of [(b) (7) (C).....] in the Project to show "the communist help King is receiving in his proposed Washington Spring Project". (u)

On March 20, 1968, Hoover approved briefing Cardinal O'Boyle and Bishop Lord of Washington about the potential for violence in the Spring Project and asking them to call for non-violence. On March 21, the Director sent an "Urgent" teletype to various field offices reminding them to carry out previous instructions concerning the Project. On March 25, the President was advised by the Bureau that Robert Kennedy (D-N.Y.) had attempted to contact King before he announced for the Presidency. The next day an updated 39 page monograph about King was disseminated and (b) (7) (C) was overheard discussing plans and fund raising for the Project. (u)

On March 28, 1968, Dr. King led a march in Memphis, in support of striking sanitation workers. The march turned violent and King was taken by his aides and the police from the area to a Holiday Inn. As a COINTELPRO activity, Hoover approved

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

- 50 -

~~SECRET~~

sending the following information to "friendly" news media: (u)

Martin Luther King injected himself into the strike in Memphis... and the result of King's famous espousal of nonviolence was vandalism, looting and riot. (u)

Previously, King involved himself in this strike, called for a general strike, and called for a mass march. Today he led the mass march in an automobile at the head of the line. Negroes began shouting 'black power' and trouble began. King, apparently unable or unwilling to control the marchers, absented himself from the scene; window breaking and looting broke out. (u)

\* \* \*

Memphis may only be the prelude to the civil strife in our Nation's Capitol. (u)

On March 29 and 30, 1968 King engaged in several overheard telephone conversations and meetings, some with (b)(7)(C) to discuss the Memphis violence. He was extremely dejected and considered his image and the image of nonviolence to have been adversely affected. The press was critical. At first he considered abandoning Memphis and the Spring Project; he considered a public fast. Aides feared for his safety if he returned to Memphis... (b)(7)(C) strongly urged him to go forward with his plans. He told King that he was not responsible for the violence of others. Finally, after a long meeting in Atlanta with his staff and (b)(7)(C) King decided to return to Memphis. (u)

UNCLASSIFIED

~~TOP SECRET~~

On April 1, 1968, the Bureau advised the White House, but not Attorney General Clark, of a tapped discussion between (b) (7) (C) and King concerning the Presidential race between Johnson, Kennedy and McCarthy. On April 2, Attorney General Clark turned down a request to tap SCLC in Atlanta and Washington. (u)

The Bureau directed four specific COINTELPRO activities against King in 1968. Most were clearly designed to have an adverse effect on the Spring Project, particularly with respect to fund raising. One, of course, concerned King's staying at the Holiday Inn in Memphis. (u)

King was assassinated in Memphis on April 4, 1968. (u) (X) continued to give advice to Coretta King, Andrew Young and others. The Bureau continued their campaign against King by various periodic briefings designed to thwart declaring King's birthday a national holiday. (u)

TOP SECRET (last page)