

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : SAC, CLEVELAND

DATE: 3/28/68

265 JWH
FROM:

SAC, MEMPHIS (170-98) (P)

SUBJECT: REV. JAMES MORRIS LAWSON, JR.
SM - C

(OO: Memphis)

For the information of receiving offices, Rev. JAMES MORRIS LAWSON, JR., male Negro, currently resides 653 Alston, Memphis, Tennessee, and is pastor of the Centenary Methodist Church, now located 584 East McLemore, Memphis, Tennessee.

Records of U. S. District Court, Cleveland, Ohio, revealed that on 4/25/51 Rev. JAMES MORRIS LAWSON, JR., was convicted in U. S. District Court, Cleveland, on 4/25/51 and sentenced by Honorable CHARLES J. MC NAMEE, U. S. District Judge, to imprisonment for three years for violation of the Selective Service Act of 1948.

The "Washington News," of April 26, 1958, under a Cleveland date line of 4/26/58, stated that JAMES LAWSON, then a 22-year-old pre-ministerial student, had on that date been sentenced to three years in Federal Prison despite the plea of Methodist Church officials; that the Methodist Board of Foreign Missions had told Judge MC NAMEE it planned to send LAWSON, then a student at Baldwin-Wallace College, to Africa or India as a missionary.

- 2 - Cleveland (RM)
- 2 - Jackson (RM)
- 2 - Knoxville (RM)
- 2 - New York (RM)
- 2 - Omaha (RM)
- 2 - Washington Field (RM)
- ④ - Memphis
(3 - 170-98)
(1 - 157-1092, SANITATION WORKERS STRIKE, MEMPHIS, TENN.)

WHL:gmh

(16)

JWH

SEARCHED	
SERIALIZED	<i>APC</i>
INDEXED	
FILED	<i>H</i>

157-1092-180

LAWSON is described as follows:

Name:	JAMES MORRIS LAWSON, JR.
Born:	Uniontown, Pennsylvania, 9/22/28
Height:	5'10"
Weight:	180 lbs.
Race:	Negro
Hair:	Black
Eyes:	Maroon
Complexion:	Light Brown
FBI No.:	66-511A

The following is a characterization of
LAWSON:

On May 9, 1967, a first source [REDACTED] advised that on a KATZ-TV panel discussion on Sunday, April 30, 1967, Rev. JAMES MORRIS LAWSON, JR., Negro male, pastor of the Centenary Methodist Church, Memphis, and who had been a leader in the April, 1967, demonstrations in Memphis opposing United States policy in Vietnam, was asked by Panelist CLARK PORTEOUS, "Press-Scimitar" newspaper reporter, if he, LAWSON, was a Communist. LAWSON replied that he was not a member of the Communist Party (CP) but he felt that the Communist program had many good points and had much to offer the United States.

A second source [REDACTED] advised that Rev. JAMES MORRIS LAWSON, JR., was one of the original founders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1960 and has since that time been considered as a leader in the so-called nonviolent tactics and source recalled that constantly during April, May, June and July, 1967, LAWSON regularly participated as a leader in demonstrations in Memphis opposing United States policy in Vietnam.

On February 23, 1968, a third source [REDACTED] advised that Rev. JAMES MORRIS LAWSON, JR., was planning to leave the United States at New York, New York, March 28, 1968, to go to Belgium, Germany and to Prague, Czechoslovakia, where he was to be a delegate to a Christian Peace Conference.

On March 8, 1968, source one [redacted] advised that during the television program, "Press Conference," on Sunday, March 3, 1968, at 12:30 p.m., on WHBQ-TV, Channel 13, Memphis, Tennessee, Rev. JAMES MORRIS LAWSON, JR., was interviewed by a news panel consisting of JIM EVANS, UPI Bureau Chief, Memphis; CLARK PORTEOUS, veteran reporter for the Memphis "Press-Scimitar"; and by DON STEVENS, News Director, WHBQ-TV. In response to a question by CLARK PORTEOUS regarding the Memphis Sanitation Strike, which began 2/12/68, LAWSON stated that he was a leader in support of the strike, which is being supported by the Memphis Ministerial Alliance. PORTEOUS asked LAWSON if his group planned to bring any "black power" boys into the strike activity. LAWSON stated that the group was bringing in the "black power" boys as the group wanted a "united front."

In response to a question by both STEVENS and PORTEOUS regarding the possible importing of outsiders into Memphis, LAWSON replied that he definitely wanted to bring in such people as MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); and when asked about STOKELY CARMICHAEL of the SNCC being brought in, LAWSON replied that he had known CARMICHAEL for eight years and felt that CARMICHAEL was doing much to unify Negroes all over the eastern seaboard; and that if it was necessary to insure a united Negro effort in Memphis, he, LAWSON, would bring CARMICHAEL to Memphis. LAWSON blamed the "bad judgment and actions of the Memphis Police Department" for all the trouble thus far in connection with the sanitation workers strike which started February 12, 1968.

(The above sources utilized in the characterization of Rev. LAWSON should be protected when this information is used in communications.)

For the information of receiving offices, the sanitation workers strike in Memphis continues.

ME 170-98



it had been ascertained that the following calls had been made from the phones of Rev. JAMES MORRIS LAWSON, JR., Church Phone: 946-7601; residence phone: 948-6994, during January and February, 1968. These calls are set out hereinafter by Field Division in alphabetical order and are listed as follows:

CLEVELAND, OHIO DIVISION:

<u>Date of Call</u>	<u>Place Called</u>
1/10/68	Cleveland, Ohio, Phone No. 216-921-4179
1/10/68	"

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI, DIVISION:

<u>Date of Call</u>	<u>Place Called</u>
1/29/68	Jackson, Miss., Phone No. 601-982-4242
1/31/68	Jackson, Miss., Phone No. 601-982-4242

KNOXVILLE DIVISION:

<u>Date of Call</u>	<u>Place Called</u>
1/12/68	Charleston, Tenn. (Bradley County) Phone No. 615-336-2641;
2/1/68	Charleston, Tenn. (Bradley County) Phone No. 615-336-2648;
2/26/68	Charleston, Tenn. (Bradley County) Phone No. 615-336-2648;
2/3/68	Cleveland, Tenn., Phone No. 472-5411

ME 170-98

NEW YORK DIVISION:

<u>Date of Call</u>	<u>Number Called</u>
1/28/68	New York, N.Y., 212-233-0536
1/29/68	New York, N.Y., 212-233-0536
1/28/68	New York, N.Y., 212-233-0613
2/19/68	New York, N.Y., 212-870-2397

OMAHA DIVISION:

<u>Date of Call</u>	<u>Place Called</u>
1/22/68	Des Moines, Iowa, Phone No. 515-283-1991

WASHINGTON FIELD DIVISION:

<u>Date of Call</u>	<u>Place Called</u>
1/29/68	Washington, D.C., Phone No. 202-387-7445
1/29/68	Washington, D. C., Phone No. 202-483-4742

MEMPHIS DIVISION

AT NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

<u>Date of Call</u>	<u>Number Called</u>
1/23/68	615-291-5910
1/26/68	615-291-3106
1/26/68	615-291-6930
1/26/68	615-291-5910
1/29/68	615-291-5910

AT JACKSON, TENNESSEE

1/23/68	422-3331
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ME 170-98

LEADS:

THE CLEVELAND, JACKSON, KNOXVILLE, NEW YORK, OMAHA, and
WASHINGTON FIELD DIVISIONS

Will identify subscribers to the numbers listed hereinbefore in their respective divisions and thereafter search indices and furnish Memphis with any pertinent information concerning subscribers to the telephone numbers contacted by Rev. LAWSON.

WASHINGTON FIELD DIVISION

Will also check records of Passport Division, Washington, D. C., regarding Rev. JAMES MORRIS LAWSON, JR., it being noted that he is scheduled to go to Prague, Czechoslovakia, to leave New York on or about 3/28/68.

MEMPHIS DIVISION

AT NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Will check the Nashville telephone numbers listed hereinbefore and furnish results to Memphis.

AT JACKSON, TENNESSEE

Will check the Jackson telephone number listed hereinbefore, 422-3331.