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JOHN EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR



Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.
SEP 24 1943

PERSONAL AND ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
BY SPECIAL MESSENGER

Major General Edwin M. Watson
Secretary to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear General Watson:

I wanted to make available to the President and you the accompanying monograph concerning a "Survey of Racial Conditions in the United States."

This material includes information received by this Bureau as late as August 5, 1943, and represents data concerning un-American forces, as well as social, economic and political factors which affect racial conditions. No investigation, however, has been made with respect to these factors. The information relative thereto has been furnished by sources of information in offering their opinions and conclusions as to the causes of racial unrest and tension in various areas in this country.

With assurances of my highest regards,

Sincerely yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 11652, Sec. 5(E)(2)
Justice Dept. letter, 9-21-72
by RHP, M.R. Date

Attachment

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INTRODUCTION

SURVEY OF RACIAL CONDITIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

For a period in excess of two years the Federal Bureau of Investigation has received reports and allegations of forces with foreign influence and with anti-American ideology working among the Negro people of this country as well as exploiting them. Based thereon, inquiries and investigations have been undertaken to determine why particular Negroes or groups of Negroes or Negro organizations have evidenced sentiments for other "dark races" (mainly Japanese) or by what forces they were influenced to adopt in certain instances un-American ideologies. Observations and inquiries have been made into the maneuverings on the part of subversive groups to exploit members of the Negro race in this country.

From the data which have been developed through the investigative jurisdiction of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as from information voluntarily supplied by various sources, this survey has been prepared. It portrays the existing picture in this matter as based upon these data and this information, broken down hereinafter according to the areas enveloped by the fifty-six Field Divisions of this Bureau. To supplement this section, there has been prepared a compilation of information in the form of an appendix which forms the second section. The appendix deals with organizational activity and is meant to elaborate on references to various organizations and groups throughout the body of this survey.

It is pointed out that the myriad factors to be considered in racial conditions in this country, including, broadly, economic, political and social aspects, have presented themselves in practically all of the areas included in this survey. They necessarily have had to be considered inasmuch as these factors have been outlined and described by sources of information in their opinions or conclusions based upon their reasoning as to the causes of racial unrest or dissatisfaction. It might be noted these aspects have also been referred to by various sources in an attempt to controvert some of the allegations that there is un-American-inspired agitation among colored people in certain areas.

The information contained in the ensuing pages of this study does not, nor is it meant to, give rise to an inference that Negroes as a whole or the Negro people in a particular area are subversive or are influenced by anti-American forces. At the same time, it must be pointed out that a number

of Negroes and Negro groups have been the subjects of concentrated investigation made on the basis that they have reportedly acted or have exhibited sentiments in a manner inimical to the Nation's war effort.

It has been stated previously that reports and allegations have been received by the Federal Bureau of Investigation concerning the reasons for racial conditions as they exist in certain areas. They have been numerous and have been augmented by innumerable complaints received from the public in a majority of the Field Divisions of this Bureau. The complaints have related of unrest, discontent and disaffection among members of the Negro race. They have included allegations of statements or utterances by members of the colored race which on the surface appear to be definitely in opposition to the war effort. At the same time, there have been instances of subversive activities alleged to exist among certain Negroes.

Upon receipt of such complaints and allegations, investigations and inquiries were promptly instituted. The results thereof, along with additional information reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, are set out immediately hereinafter in the form of digests, grouped in geographical areas of the United States. Preceding each geographical area is an introduction summarizing the important factors and forces considered responsible for racial unrest and discontent in the area involved. Following the digests is set forth the conclusion. Thereafter, forming Section Two of this survey, is the appendix which includes information concerning organizational activity among the Negroes of this country.

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MIAMI FIELD DIVISION

Extensive investigation in this area, especially with regard to the cities of Jacksonville and Tampa, Florida, has failed to develop any showing of unrest or dissatisfaction among Negroes in this area caused by pro-German, pro-Italian, pro-Japanese or pro-Communist forces; rather that unrest and dissatisfaction among the Negroes in this area is stated to result from social and economic causes. Several complaints have been received, however, to the effect that Negroes have made pro-Japanese statements.

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

With regard to the City of Jacksonville, sources of information contacted there advise that the Negro situation there is solely a result of local conditions involving social and economic matters. A source of information, who has resided in Jacksonville for many years and who has operated theaters in the heart of the Negro section there, states that he has seen many strange faces among the Negroes, indicating that thousands have migrated to Jacksonville from other places to obtain employment. He stated in many instances these Negroes are trouble makers. He has advised that he has not heard of either white or Negro organizations attempting to incite the Negroes to riot but that the local problem among the Negroes is becoming more acute daily since so many Negroes are in the Armed Forces that expect and assert their demands for the same privileges as are enjoyed by the white men in the Armed Forces. He advised that the Negroes openly state that they want no discrimination of any sort such as segregated toilets, drinking fountains, theater seating, et cetera. He has informed that never in the history of the South has the Negro been able to earn as much as he presently gets and that the economic phase in his life urges him to take or demand the same privileges as are afforded white people.

Another source of information, who has for many months been making a study of the Negro problem in and around this city, believes that unrest, dissatisfaction and troubles among the Negroes are a result of the influx of many northern Negro civilians and soldiers. He has compared the conditions during the first World War with those of the present, saying that so many northern Negroes who had been brought into the South, or who have migrated there, attempt to indoctrinate the southern Negroes with northern ideas. He has advised that Negro soldiers informed the southern Negroes that "We are all fighting for the same cause, and a white soldier is no better than a Negro soldier, and that all Negro soldiers should insist on having the rights and privileges which are accorded to white men in uniform." In this connection it is reported that the situation is well in hand, having come about through the cooperation of the local Police Department and United States Army officials who have placed tried and experienced Negro Military Police in the Negro section of Jacksonville while the Police Department has stationed in this section officers experienced in handling Negroes who know how to cope with any situation outside of a general riot that may develop.

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A complaint has been received from a member of the Jacksonville Ministerial Alliance who has stated that an investigation of the vice and gambling among the Negroes in Jacksonville should be made. The opinion was expressed that police authorities are inactive as far as this situation is concerned and it was alleged that some of the members of the Police Department may be involved in the gambling situation in the Negro sections.

Other causes for unrest and dissatisfaction among the Negroes in this area are attributed to editorials appearing in New York, Philadelphia and Chicago newspapers, as well as in northern Negro publications. It is stated that it is being constantly brought to the attention of the Negroes in this area that they are discriminated against in hotels, trains, buses, street cars, public parks and theaters. It is further brought to their attention that they are allegedly not assigned to the same duties as white soldiers when in the Army and that Negro school teachers are allegedly paid lesser wages than those received by white school teachers.

TAMPA, FLORIDA

In this area, where it is reported some unrest exists among the Negroes, investigation which has been made fails to disclose any agitation among the Negroes caused by un-American organizations or groups or individuals. Sources of information interviewed advise that conditions are much better for the Negroes at the present time in this area inasmuch as they have their own Federal housing project, their own theater, a hospital and are presently being paid higher wages than in other years. It is stated that there is little unemployment among the Negroes, many of them being employed on defense projects.

In April, 1942, a near race riot occurred at the Tampa Shipbuilding Yards which was started under the following circumstances:

While the workers were in line passing through the gate, a white man stepped on the toes of a Negro and thereupon apologized. However, the Negro made some remarks whereupon the white man slapped the face of the Negro. Soon Negro people and white people engaged in a fight but were subsequently halted by the guards. Subsequently all employees were searched with the result that an ice pick, a knife and a revolver were found. Inquiries made of this incident failed to reflect agitation from the outside but rather that the instance could be regarded as a personal altercation between white and colored employees.

It should be reported that a series of assaults on white women were made by several colored youths late in the Spring of 1942. At the time, the Police Department in Tampa was assisted by leading colored citizens who are said to have been anxious to have the wrongdoers apprehended. On the whole, it is stated that the Negroes from this city are law abiding and patriotic.

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Information has been received that the influx of northern Negroes in this area, especially the Negro soldiers, has caused some trouble among the Negro inhabitants in that the southern Negro is told by the northern Negro that the present war is everyone's war and that colored soldiers accordingly should be entitled to the rights and privileges afforded the white soldiers. It should be noted that it is reported that Negro soldiers complained about not being given the same duties as the white soldiers. To this has been attributed the unrest that is being caused and created by the Negro soldiers.

In this area, it is alleged, some of the unrest among the Negroes can be attributed to northern publications which advocate the equality of Negroes. Linked with these publications as part of the cause for unrest are the actions and statements made by the northern Negroes in this area which are said to influence the southern Negro to such an extent that he becomes dissatisfied.

Those incidents or situations wherein trouble was caused involving the Negro are said not to be caused by agitation by either white or colored individuals or by foreign forces. Those incidents which do involve a Negro soldier now and then are said to have been caused by an intoxicated Negro soldier or by some civilian attempting to get a Negro soldier to brawl.

It was reported in January, 1943 that a "rum" on the post office had been made by Negroes who desire to cash their war savings stamps. The rumor accompanying this "rum" was that Negroes had heard the stamps would be valueless after January 18, 1943. Inquiries made into this matter to determine if subversive forces were responsible for the rumor met with negative results. However, opinions were furnished by sources of information in a position to know and understand the Negro population in the area that the situation was caused by lack of education on the part of the Negroes who attempted to or did cash in war stamps. In this connection, the source of information has pointed out that in late 1940 or early 1941 a similar "rum" was made by Negroes, who withdrew their postal savings, because of a rumor floating around through the colored section of the city that postal savings were not safe investments. Several individuals who cashed in their stamps expressed their reason for so doing to be that they needed the money for clothes and other material. In all, no logical or specific information was developed or reported that subversive forces were responsible for the "rum."

It was reported in May, 1943 that Negroes attached to an Engineer Corps at the Army Air Corps base under construction at Cross City, Florida, upon arriving in the vicinity of that city attempted to associate with white residents, especially in bars and eating places theretofore restricted to

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white people. A number of these soldiers were northern Negroes. At first, although after some argument, the situation was allegedly clarified and a solution arrived at. However, subsequently, it appeared, some of the Negro soldiers insisted on entering public gathering places normally restricted to white people. It is further reported that on one occasion Negro soldiers chased a proprietor out of his place of business after he had allegedly advised them, "niggers" were not permitted to come into his place of business. As a result, the white citizens of the city allegedly began arming themselves in preparation for additional advances by Negro soldiers. This matter was taken up by local as well as state and Army officials, and a program was set out. Allegations were also received that Negro Military Police armed with firearms which, according to Army officials, were unloaded had fired their guns within the city limits of Cross City and had been seen by at least twenty-five people to be shooting fish from the bridge near the town. No trouble has been reported from this area since this time.

The situation in Monticello, Madison, Greenville and Perry, Florida has been reportedly quiet, and there are no indications of any un-American activity among the Negroes there.

On April 4, 1943 what resulted in a near race riot took place at Orlando, Florida. It is reported that a short time prior to that date three battalions of Negro troops had been moved in. A truckload of the Negro troops had been taken into the city on that date, which stopped in the middle of Church Street where the Negro soldiers got out and blocked the traffic. A white man attempting to drive his automobile through blew his horn and was approached by one of the Negroes, who cursed him and referred to his wife in a derogatory sense. The white man is said to have started a fight with the Negro soldiers, and immediately a near riot was begun by the Negro troops with Negro civilians who took the part of the white man. The incident was finally quieted by local officers and the Military Police, but not until at least one knife had been drawn and several Negro soldiers badly beaten.

On April 13, 1943 three thousand Bahaman Negroes were being brought into the Everglades area of Florida to do farm labor. They had been quartered in army tents at three Farm Security Administration labor camps in the Everglades area adjacent to and in close proximity to settlements of native Negro citizens. Sources of information have advised that there is a possibility of trouble between the Bahaman Negroes and the Florida Negroes, in view of a long-standing animosity between the two groups.

It was reported in June, 1943 that in the city of Tallahassee there were evidences of members of the Jehovah's Witnesses sect approaching Negroes, attempting to obtain their affiliations with the sect. No indications

have been received, however, that these workers for the Jehovah's Witnesses sect have been attempting to develop racial antagonism or un-Americanism among the Negroes there.

On the night of June 24, 1943 a company consisting of Negro soldiers at Camp Blanding, Florida staged a dance at the camp. Members of another Negro company, Company D, milled about the dance and staged something similar to a demonstration. When ordered away by Military Police, they became angered and resentful. Subsequently, members of Company D gained access to gun racks which had been left unlocked and secured fourteen rifles, as well as ammunition which had been left over from range practice and war games. They fired rounds of ammunition into the crowd at the dance, and as a result nine Negro girls, eight Negro soldiers and one white officer received wounds. The origin of this trouble was allegedly founded in ill feelings which existed between the company staging the dance and Company D. These ill feelings reportedly grew out of action taken by Military Police of the company which had staged the dance prior to the outburst of trouble. Five Negro soldiers were taken into custody for their activities in connection with the shooting. Blame was also placed on officers who permitted the gun racks to get unlocked and did not collect surplus ammunition.

In addition, inquiries have been made in other communities of Florida where it has been ascertained that, although some degree of unrest appears prevalent, no indications are apparent that subversive or un-American forces have been agitating or exploiting the Negro population. However, opinions have been offered that a considerable amount of trouble has been caused by out-of-state Negroes, mainly northern Negroes being sent to this state for military training or service.

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