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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION



SUBJECT: RACIAL VIOLENCE POTENTIAL IN
THE UNITED STATES THIS SUMMER

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PREFACE

This document is, in essence, an intelligence survey of this summer's racial violence potential in the United States. Its contents were derived from public sources, public officials, police officers, knowledgeable observers, and FBI sources. This document should not, however, be regarded as a report based upon the results of any specific investigation conducted by the FBI.

OVERVIEWContinuing Racial Tension

After three consecutive summers of racial turbulence in the United States, there were hopes that the social, economic, and political gains achieved by the Negro in recent years might be alleviating racial unrest and strife. Civil rights legislation, antipoverty programs, and better police-community relations have brought a measure of improvement in the status and treatment of Negroes, but discontent and frustration persist. Race relations have deteriorated in a number of cities throughout the country during the past year.

Seasonal Phenomenon

We are now in the midst of an era of protracted racial conflict that has produced a crisis in law enforcement. Along with the annual seasonal rise in summertime crime, it is painfully evident that racial turmoil has similarly become a summer phenomenon. The racial violence potential is especially high in hot weather in the Nation's urban areas because large numbers of Negroes, living under crowded, depressed conditions in ghettos, take to the streets to escape the heat and seek relaxation and recreation. The situation is compounded by the restiveness and alienation of large numbers of idle junior and senior high school students and other Negro youths. Because of the combustible temper of the times, an inconsequential incident can ignite a riotous situation in any city or town in the country.

Another Riotous Summer

The Spring of 1967 has already witnessed almost daily outbreaks of racial disorder somewhere in the country. All signs point toward recurrent racial convulsions throughout the country this summer--more than likely on an even wider scale than in previous years--marked by plundering, arson, destruction, and attacks on law enforcement officers. There is the added danger this year that the scenes of racial strife in large cities might spread from Negro

communities into white neighborhoods and that increased numbers of white people might resort to violence in an effort to counter Negro demonstrators or rioters. The threat of racial violence hangs heavy over every urban community in the land. In an atmosphere of ever-present tension, violence can strike anywhere at any time with all the unpredictability, rapidity, and destructiveness of a tornado.

Civil Rights Linked with Vietnam

Most of the riots and disturbances of the past three years have been spontaneous eruptions of mob violence, triggered by some trivial incident and fueled by teen-age Negro youths and various lawless and irresponsible ghetto elements. But incessant agitation and propaganda on the part of communists and other subversives and extremists have definitely contributed to Negro unrest and fomented violence. In particular, demagogues like Martin Luther King, Stokely Carmichael, Floyd McKissick, Cassius Clay, and Dick Gregory have fanned the fires of racial discord and animosity. King has now joined Carmichael, McKissick, and other civil rights extremists in embracing the communist tactic of linking the civil rights movement with the anti-Vietnam-war protest movement, claiming that United States involvement in Vietnam is diverting attention from civil rights. King's exhortation to boycott the draft and refuse to fight could lead eventually to dangerous displays of civil disobedience and near-seditious activities by Negroes and whites alike. Thus, the antiwar campaign endorsed by King helps to promote communist aims and programs in the United States and abroad.

FUSION OF CIVIL RIGHTS AND ANTIWAR MOVEMENTSAggravating Tension

The innumerable racial riots and disturbances which have plagued the United States since 1964 have had their genesis primarily in the long-smoldering discontent and resentment of Negroes over unequal job, school, and housing opportunities and their deep-seated antipathy toward the police. However, constant agitation and propaganda on the part of communists and other subversive and extremist elements have done much to aggravate tension in the ghettos of the Nation's big cities.

In the nearly 48 years of its existence, the Communist Party, USA (CPUSA), has subjected Negroes to unending agitation and propaganda. It has portrayed itself to this minority group as the champion of racial equality, civil rights, civil liberties, and social protest. To the credit of the Negroes and to the great disappointment of the communists, the Communist Party has not been able to recruit and retain significant numbers of Negroes as members. Most Negroes realize that the communists are interested in them primarily to exploit racial issues and to create the chaos upon which communism nourishes. Nevertheless, the cumulative effect of this ceaseless agitation and propaganda and the familiar communist charge of "police brutality" cannot be ignored or minimized.

Creating Opposition to Vietnam War

During a period which has now extended beyond three years, the CPUSA and other subversive organizations have been engaged in campaigns to influence the United States Government to withdraw its troops from Vietnam or to participate in negotiations to end the war. They hope, of course, that either action would result ultimately in advancing the cause of international communism through a victory in Vietnam.

The activities of the CPUSA in recent months have, almost without exception, been directed in one way or another toward the creation of opposition to the war

in Vietnam. This opposition, the communists reason, serves to lend encouragement to the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong to continue the fighting despite military adversities and could lead to domestic discontent in the United States similar to that which contributed to the French military disengagement from events in Indochina. In view of the historic designs of the CPUSA on the Negro people and the racial ferment that has been evidenced by the disturbances of recent summers, it was inevitable that the communists and other subversives and extremists would attempt to link civil rights protests with antiwar protests so as to increase the magnitude and impetus of each.

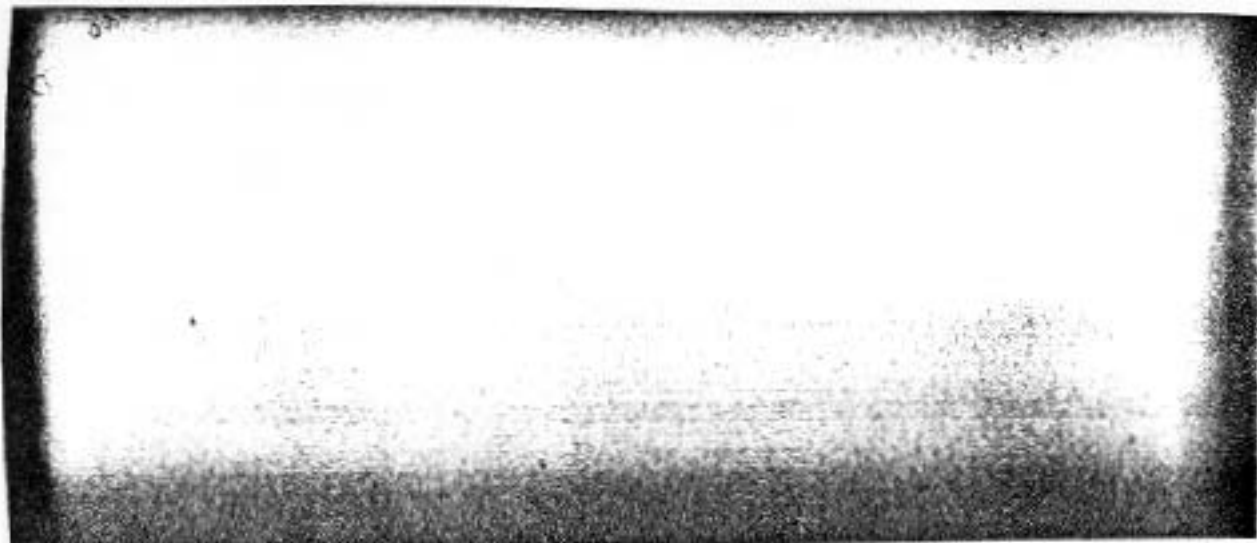
As early as April, 1965, General Secretary Gus Hall told the CPUSA Secretariat that the "peace struggle" is a major and top priority project of the CPUSA. At the same time, Hall claimed that the protest movements in this country were converging, with peace leaders becoming civil rights leaders and vice versa. By and large, Hall continued, the same mass of people reacted against the ultraright in the 1964 presidential election, against conditions in Alabama, and against events in Vietnam. The struggle for social progress and the struggle against policies of imperialist aggressions were, in Hall's words, now joined.

Union of Civil Rights and Peace Movements

In antiwar propaganda attuned to Hall's assertion, the CPUSA claims that the war in Vietnam has racial overtones not only because it involves nonwhites in Asia but also because it consumes funds that might otherwise be expended for the war on poverty in the depressed areas of large cities inhabited by Negroes. The CPUSA has also praised the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the militant civil rights youth group, for being the first to make the tie between civil rights and peace.

A recent illustration of the fusion of the civil rights and antiwar movements was the so-called "Vietnam Week," which culminated in mass demonstrations in New York City and San Francisco on April 15, 1967.

This protest activity was sponsored by the Student Mobilization Committee and the Spring Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. Among the participants in the activities of these committees are members of SNCC; the CPUSA; the W. E. B. DuBois Clubs of America (DCA), a communist-inspired Marxist-oriented youth group; the pro-Red-Chinese Progressive Labor Party (PLP); the Trotskyite Socialist Workers Party (SWP); and the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), the SWP's youth and training section.



The activities in one CPUSA district, selected at random, show the extent of communist involvement in the New York City demonstration on April 15. In early March, members of the Michigan District were told that they must concentrate on laboring people, Negro communities, and nationalities groups to organize people to participate in the April 15 demonstration in New York City. The Michigan District Committee appointed a four-man committee in mid-March to handle arrangements for the mobilization in New York City. Activities in connection with the mobilization were described as the most important of all endeavors by members of the Michigan District.

Participants in the parade in New York City on April 15 included Gus Hall and at least 200 CPUSA members. Over one half of the total SWP membership in the United States also marched in the parade. Others participating in the parade and rally in New York City were several members of the DCA, PLP, and YSA.

The Reverend James Bevel is the National Director of the Spring Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. He was released by Martin Luther King from a key position in King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference to permit him to take this assignment.

Significantly, among the principal speakers at the antiwar rally in New York City on April 15 were Martin Luther King; Stokely Carmichael, a top figure in SNCC; Floyd McKissick, National Director of CORE; and Bevel. Bevel stated that the next objective of the "peace forces" will be to organize a massive march on Washington, D. C., to confront President Johnson.

Another speaker at this rally was Linda Dannenberg, Executive Secretary of the Spring Mobilization Committee, who is known to consult with leaders of the New York District of the CPUSA. Dannenberg announced that thousands are going to be called upon for a "radical action summer" in which they will go into every town in the United States to organize a massive protest against this country's involvement in the war in Vietnam. She requested that every interested student attend an antiwar meeting in Chicago on May 13 and 14, 1967.

As a follow-up to these peace demonstrations, King and other leaders of the Spring Mobilization Committee launched a nationwide "Vietnam Summer" organizing effort. They called for 10,000 volunteers, including 2,000 full-time workers, to spend the summer in 500 communities escalating opposition to the Vietnam war, encouraging Negroes to refuse to be drafted, and attempting to create a political bloc powerful enough to end the war. The antiwar campaign is patterned after the 1964 summer civil rights drive in Mississippi.

Now that the civil rights and the antiwar protest movements have been joined, with the distinct possibility of ominous displays of civil disobedience and near seditious activities on the part of Negroes and whites alike, the outlook for this summer is grim indeed. The injection of antiwar activities into civil rights activities is bound to intensify racial discord and heighten the violence potential throughout the country.

In the long run, this consolidated civil rights-peace movement will be detrimental to the national security and best interests of the Nation, for it will not only tend to encourage the enemy and prolong the Vietnam war but will also have an adverse effect on the cause of civil rights.