

FACT SHEET ON THE RAID AND ARRESTS

Conducted by State and City Police at SCEF New Orleans Headquarters at the Behest of the Louisiana Committee on Un-American Activities October 4, 1963

THE CHARGES: Violation of Louisiana Revised Statute Title 14, Section 388 et seq. "The Subversive Activities and Communist Control Law" and Section 390 et seq. "The Communist Propaganda Control Act" by "organizing between themselves and with other unknown people and their doing certain acts to carry out said agreement, to violate the aforesaid statutes by knowingly and willfully participating in the management of a subversive organization, and secreting books, records and files of a subversive organization, said subversive organization herein referred to being specifically the Southern Conference Educational Fund Inc., and also distributing and storing Communist political propaganda in the State of Louisiana."

THOSE ARRESTED: Dr. James A. Dombrowski, executive director of the SCEF. Benjamin E. Smith, SCEF treasurer, labor and civil rights attorney and counsel for the ACLU in Louisiana, and former assistant district attorney in New Orleans. Bruce C. Waltzer, Smith's law partner, who has no connection with the SCEF.

THE RAID: Conducted by about 100 policemen and jail trustees in five simultaneous strikes at the offices and the homes of the three arrested men. Streets outside were cordoned off during the three-hour ransacking, in which personal and official property was indiscriminately seized.

The Louisiana Joint Legislative Committee on Un-American Activities proclaimed it had inspired this action.

The committee's legal counsel told the press the raid hadn't been "coordinated" with the FBI because, while the committee had complete confidence in J. Edgar Hoover, "we have no confidence whatsoever" in U. S. Attorney-General Robert F. Kennedy.

"We knew that if we told the FBI about this raid they would have to tell Bobby Kennedy. We cannot trust him and we expect him to tell his friend, Martin Luther King."

Although the committee boasted that the raid had been planned for eleven months, the raiders first came to the wrong office in the building and broke down the door of an empty room with sledgehammers.

At the Dombrowski home, policemen repeatedly threatened to shoot the family dachshund, although the dog was on a leash.

THE REACTION: The Rabbinical Council of New Orleans declared, "We denounce the subversive practices of sudden arrests and immediate confiscation of property and records in imitation of Communistic tactics."

The rabbis also endorsed the statement of the Louisiana branch of the ACLU, which called the raid "a dangerous act of political repression committed by our state government" and said the law under which the charges were filed "is an unconstitutional device designed to inhibit the flow of free ideas and free speech."

At the time of this writing, other groups in New Orleans—religious, labor and legal—were reported preparing similar denunciations.

In Atlanta, the Reverend Martin Luther King said, "Such smear tactics against efforts to bring about true brotherhood of man in the South have shown signs of increasing in intensity during recent months. This Friday action followed shortly after a massive demonstration last Tuesday in New Orleans by some 10,000 Negroes and approximately 300 whites seeking freedom, and followed . . . charges brought by Ross Barnett and George Wallace before a congressional committee in recent weeks that the search for freedom in this country was communist-inspired."

The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee wired Attorney-General Kennedy, asserting that "state sedition laws under which these persons were arrested, were outlawed by the U. S. Supreme Court seven years ago."

"This is another demonstration of the lawlessness and defiance of authority by segregationists," their telegram concluded.

WHAT CAN BE DONE: We ask you to—

- Wire or write the U. S. Attorney General and the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights in Washington, D. C., asking them to intervene in this unconstitutional outrage. Protests to Louisiana Governor Jimmie Davis and New Orleans Mayor Victor Schiro would also be helpful.
- Spread the word of the case to others—to organizations, to individuals. A letter to the editor of your local paper can do much to foster nationwide interest.
- Advise us of what action you have taken.
- PLEASE, if possible, send a special contribution to help us with the expenses of virtually rebuilding an office and with the even greater prospective costs of the legal battles that lie ahead.

THE SOUTHERN CONFERENCE EDUCATIONAL FUND

822 Perdido Street
New Orleans 12, La.

October 10, 1963