

MISSISSIPPI
STATE SOVEREIGNTY COMMISSION
NEW CAPITOL BUILDING JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI
GOVERNOR PAUL B. JOHNSON, CHAIRMAN

ERLE JOHNSTON, JR.
DIRECTOR

PHONES 354-3218
948-2053

October 11, 1966

MEMORANDUM

TO: File

FROM: Director, Sovereignty Commission

SUBJECT: Grenada

During the past several days, Chief Investigator Tom Scarbrough has been working in the Grenada area obtaining information to supplement other sources on the attitude of local Negroes toward the white community and also the leadership of Martin Luther King.

Mr. Scarbrough was instructed to determine if a sentiment existed in the Negro community that might be exploited into either a removal of the King crowd or a break-down of confidence in King. We have remained in contact with the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of Grenada, who asked us a short time ago to make recommendations that might help relieve the tensions and end the boycott.

On the night of Monday, October 10, Mr. Scarbrough called the Director from Grenada and said he had finally hit some "pay dirt" in contacts with the Negroes. He had a meeting at Holcomb that afternoon and will meet again on the morning of October 12. At this second meeting, he expects to have a large number of native Grenada Negroes. Mr. Scarbrough has acquired a lot of information (some from our files) to show the Grenada Negroes that nothing will ever be settled peaceably as long as King is exerting his authority by threats and intimidation.

R. B. Cottonreader, c/m, one of the King strong-arm boys, became intoxicated and made a scene at the Monte Cristo restaurant. He was arrested and made bond. He has told white authorities that he plans to leave Grenada, but they have not placed much faith in his statement.

We have a proposal prepared for the Mayor and Board of Aldermen to be activated as soon as the atmosphere seems appropriate.

From other sources, we are placing in the record the names of the following Grenada Negroes who may be of assistance in a settlement: Rev. Lawrence E. Smith, Rev. B. J. Cameron, Rev. B. F. Patterson, Rev. F. T. Cunningham, Rev. C. C. Coleman, Charles Hardiman, Obie Lee Ward, Willie Savage, and Richard Jackson.

Rev. Cunningham is Pastor of the Bell Flower church and has been openly supporting the King leadership; however, Rev. Cunningham has been more inclined toward Grenada Negroes operating for themselves without outside interference. Rev. Coleman was dismissed as pastor of his church because some of this congregation members did not consider him extreme enough to support King.

Some of these people have been involved in the movement; however, there is a mutual sentiment that they can take over things themselves in Grenada without the King group.

As of this date, there are about 50 to 60 Negroes attending the previously white high school and 80 to 90 Negroes in the two previously white elementary schools. All white and colored teachers in the Grenada school system are paid exactly the same salary using state funds and the local supplement.

The Grenada investigation is continuing in the hope that sometime this month a plan can be set in motion.

Erle Johnston, Jr.

cc: Honorable Herman Glazier

EJ/ea