

TITLE: Grenada

\*\*\*\*\*

DATE OF INVESTIGATION: February 1, 1967

\*\*\*\*\*

DATE OF REPORT: February 9, 1967

\*\*\*\*\*

INVESTIGATED BY: Tom Scarbrough, Chief Investigator

\*\*\*\*\*

TYPED BY: Elizabeth Arnold

\*\*\*\*\*

Agreeable to orders from Director Johnston to pass on certain information this department has received relative to certain civil rights agitators coming into Grenada shortly, I checked with authorities there on February 1.

I advised the authorities that Hosea Williams, one of Martin Luther King's right-hand field men, was expected to return to Grenada on February 6. Williams, so I was advised in Grenada, will give tests in various parts of the county to Negroes training them how to vote in this coming summer's democratic primaries. It was said that he or someone with SCLC would go into the Negro communities in Grenada County and hold workshops training Negroes how to make out a ballot.

I also learned that two Negroes have qualified for city aldermen in the Town of Grenada, namely, James Simmons and U. S. Gillan. Gillan's name is on file in this department. It seems that U. S. Gillan announced for city alderman without the endorsement of the Negro voters. A Negro by the name of Willis has qualified to run for supervisor in the second district. Negro votes and white votes are pretty well equal in this district.

It seems that SCLC is going to make a strong effort this summer to try to elect a Negro to public office in Grenada County. This, however, is not likely to happen as there are more than 1,000 white vote majority in the county.

There have been no marches in Grenada since the night of January 25. Robert Johnson, local Negro man, is the local leader for SCLC at present. Rev. St. T. Cunningham and Edna Woods, both formerly from Selma, Alabama, are fronting for Martin Luther King locally and apparently are the mainsprings in keeping King's organization alive in Grenada. Cunningham and J. T. Johnson held a meeting on the night of January 31 in the Negro funeral home. It was believed the purpose of this meeting was to choose the crew leaders who will go out into various sections of Grenada County and hold workshops training inexperienced Negro voters how to make out their ballots.

Apparently the boycott has receded considerably as Negroes are returning trading with white merchants. The City of Grenada is employing two Negro policemen to begin work this month. They are doing this on their own rather than on any demands of Martin Luther King.

I did not find any apprehension in the white community that there might be some serious trouble or violence in Grenada soon which might be brought on by the return of King and his lieutenants; however, there appears to be present in Grenada two immovable forces, both sides determined not to give any ground to the other side. It is my personal opinion that SCLC will make a strong effort this coming spring to rekindle the racial strife that Grenada experienced last fall. I do not believe, however, that King's efforts will be as successful as the boycott which he implemented against the businessmen last fall.

The report that R. B. Cottonreader and Leon Hall had returned to Grenada is true; however, at the present time they are not there and it is believed their only reason for returning to Grenada was because they were subpoenaed by the court to be there as witnesses and defendant in this last term of court.

The Grenada situation is entirely different to any this department has thus far dealt with as Grenada is the only place in Mississippi where King has a stronghold. Another thing, there appears to be an attitude on the part of all businessmen and people in Grenada of not giving an inch to the civil rights demands, other than what the law provides.

City officials know that they can call on this department to negotiate any kind of agreement they may decide on for them and appreciate the fact we are willing to act as go-between the two forces, but at the present time they are not willing to do any more than they have already done.