

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 16, 1955

MEMORANDUM TO: Governor Adams

Your memorandum of December 13 to Val Washington, detailing results of the latest Gallup Poll, indicating that the Democrats still attract the bulk of the Negro vote, has given me some concern for many months. I have discussed this problem with many leaders and scores of individuals in various sections of the country, and have come to certain conclusions based upon personal knowledge and conversation.

It is difficult for any non-Negro to understand the Negro's attitude toward civil rights. Undoubtedly, the present Administration has done more to raise the Negro to the status of a first-class citizen than any other administration in history. Any non-Negro would expect evidence of extreme gratitude on the part of the Negro race, but the average Negro feels that he has merely come into something that should have been his at the dawn of the Republic, and while he rejoices in his new status, he feels no extreme obligation to anyone for giving him what he believes to be his inalienable rights.

Unfortunately, despite the Republican Party's noble beginning under Lincoln, in assuming the role of protector of the newly freed men, over a period of 80 years or more, the Party has assumed a paternalistic attitude toward its wards. It was not until 1933, during the heart of the Depression, when the Democrats, by necessity, gave the Negro unprecedented opportunities, job-wise, through WPA and relief setups throughout the country. It was his first chance to acquire white-collar job opportunities, and he was grateful to the Party (despite the fact that the Depression caused this) for permitting him to rise in stature in the economy of the country.

For more than 20 years, the Democrats have pointed out that when they are in power, the little man benefits, and because of this long period of tenure, thousands of Negroes have been cemented into little jobs in the Government, national, state, and city, through the Democratic machine. It is the area of economics, job opportunities, etc., that have more interest to the Negro race than anything that will be or



has been done in the field of civil rights.

In the past year, the Negro has been extremely concerned about the plight of his kinfolk in the Deep South, and particularly in Mississippi. Almost every Negro north of the Mason-Dixon line has relatives in the South, and whatever happens to them is reflected in the northern Negro's attitude toward those in power for what he feels is their failure to protect his defenseless kinfolk in the Deep South.

The failure of any prominent member of the Administration to speak out against, and deplore, the present condition of terrorism and economic sanction against the Negroes in Mississippi is causing deep concern among Negro leaders in the country today. They feel that despite the magnificent record of the Eisenhower Administration, it has completely abandoned the Negro in the South and left him to the mercy of state governments that have manifested their intention to violate all laws, human and divine, as long as it results in "keeping the Negro in his place".

It is this kind of situation that makes these people, in their emotional fright, forget all the good things that have preceded these inhuman incidents. It is characteristic of a benighted people to think with their emotions, rather than with their minds, and this is understandable only to one who has suffered from denial of citizenship privileges.

Another weak link in our armor is the fact that we have not had sufficient manpower, unrestricted by the Hatch Act, to carry the message to the people of the country. The achievement of the Eisenhower Administration in the field of human rights has not been given the publicity that it should have had. Of the more than two hundred odd prestige-appointments of Negroes made by the present Administration, less than six of these individuals are in a position to speak freely on the accomplishments of the Eisenhower Administration. An effort is being made to remedy this, and it means that much attention will have to be given to the situation during the next twelve months.

We have a wonderful story to tell that can be told with sincerity and conviction, and we need only devise a method by which the information can be spread throughout the country.

In view of these observations, I have a few concrete recommendations to make:



1. That some responsible member of the Administration make a statement deploring the breakdown of law and order in Mississippi, pointing out that this is contrary to the Eisenhower philosophy of government, of human decency, and of citizen responsibility.
2. That the National Committee make a determined effort to have state, county, and city chairmen implement the Eisenhower philosophy of first-class citizenship in all the activities of the Party, and that attention be given to placing Negroes in positions of responsibility wherever the Party has jurisdiction.
3. That when national efforts are made, like the "Salute to Eisenhower Dinners" to be held throughout the country in January, prominent Negroes be asked to participate in these programs. I have had several of these affairs called to my attention in the large cities in this country, and I am not aware that a single Negro speaker has been requested for any of these occasions. That is not wise planning!
4. That the tendency to play down the accomplishments of the Administration in the matter of race relations be abandoned, and that full acknowledgment be given to all efforts in this field.
5. That a conference of a dozen or more of the leading ministers, white and Negro in this country, be called together under the auspices of the Administration to discuss what can be done to allay the fear and despair of Negroes in Mississippi as a result of the recent wave of terrorism that has swept through that state. I suggest ministers rather than lay men so that such a conference would not give the appearance of being political or endorsing any kind of philosophy in the field of race relations. However, such a conference would lift the flagging spirits of Negro citizens in the country, and would also let the world see that this Administration is interested in doing all it can to create peace, whether in domestic or international affairs.

E. Frederic Morrow

