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44-3198-A/EN3-10
1942 JUL 12 PM 1 36

Refer to No.
ON22/ND7
PL4-2:EN3-10
(16-B-7-sef)

HEADQUARTERS
SEVENTH NAVAL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT INTELLIGENCE OFFICER
DuPONT BUILDING
MIAMI, FLORIDA

July 2, 1942.

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Declassified Downgrade to
Auth: EO 12958
Date: 28 SEPT 98 Unit: NKSJ22

From: The Commandant,
SEVENTH Naval District.
To: The Vice Chief of Naval Operations.
Subject: Members of the Negro Race, Employment of as
Civilian Agents.
Reference: (a) Your letter dated June 6, 1942, File Number
(SC)PL4-2/EN3-10:Op-16-B:LL/ND:L4-3/A8-4/
EN3-10: Serial 01173116.

1. There has been no substantial evidence to date tending to show that there has been any concerted effort to spread enemy propaganda among the negro population in the SEVENTH Naval District. There has been some evidence obtained which would indicate that the Communists have considered the negroes a fertile field for future activity, but little work has actually been done by this group. However, a system of informants and agents should be devised immediately whereby Naval Intelligence may be kept advised of any new developments along this line among the colored race.

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2. In the SEVENTH Naval District, under present circumstances, regularly employed negro agents would be of little benefit. The most paramount reason being that the very few educated negroes, such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc., who could be relied upon as permanent agents would not have any greater opportunities or facilities for gathering information than a white agent. The better class or educated type of negro as a rule does not fraternize or associate to any great extent with the predominant class of illiterate negroes towards whom enemy propaganda would be directed. The members of this last class are very talkative among their own members but are secretive among members of the better class of negroes or the white race with whom they are not well acquainted. The educated negro is just as foreign to the common rabble of negroes as the white man.

3. The employment of regular agents recruited from the common type of negroes would not be practical. The normal negro of the middle and lower classes in this District, while loyal to his country, is poorly educated, unreliable, lazy, and totally lacking in initiative. The only work he would be qualified to do in the intelligence field would be to gather specific information under the immediate

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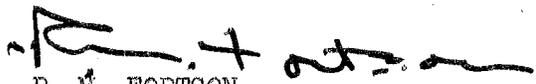
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direction of an officer or agent.

4. The apparent solution of this problem in the SEVENTH Naval District is the use of undercover informants from time to time as needed. Since the large majority of the personnel of the District Intelligence Office, SEVENTH Naval District, was recruited in the SEVENTH Naval District, many of them have excellent contacts with former trusted negro employees, police informants, tenants, etc. of civilian life. Accurate information can be obtained from these people by the present personnel of the District Intelligence Office because of the relationship of trust and confidence established for many years. These informants in obtaining desired information should work under the immediate supervision of an officer or agent of the District Intelligence Office acquainted with the informant. In most of these cases the informant would be working for the agent or officer rather than the Naval Intelligence making discreet investigations possible. This system in the SEVENTH Naval District should accomplish better results and at the same time be much less expensive than employing permanent negro agents.


R. M. FORTSON,
By direction.

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