

Navy Department
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
Washington

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From: The Vice Chief of Naval Operations
To: Commandants, All Naval Districts (except 16)
SUBJECT: Members of the Negro Race, Employment of, as Civilian Agents.

1. The well-known methods of enemy governments and propaganda indicate that the Navy must be alert to determine evidences of the fruitfulness of such propaganda in all walks of life insofar as it affects the Naval Establishment and Naval personnel. Many members of the Negro race enjoy the educational advantages that would qualify them for employment as agents in the Naval Intelligence Service. Some of these members are highly reputable and valuable assets to their communities and are outstanding members of their race. They are loyal citizens, but also are undoubtedly loyal to their race. They may possess information which would be of value to the Naval Intelligence Service which cannot be obtained from other sources.

2. The possession of the necessary educational qualifications does not, per se, entitle any applicant to employment as an agent. In each District the desired qualifications for agents differ in accordance with the qualifications already in hand. Membership in the Negro race does not disbar an individual from being employed by the Naval Intelligence Service. At times, the best advantages to the Service will accrue by employing such individuals in an undercover capacity as informants and without credentials. At other times, greater advantages may accrue in the status of an accredited agent working openly in connection with the District Intelligence Office or accredited and operating with no visible connection with the District Intelligence Organization. Each case will have to be considered on its own merits and in view of local conditions and deeply rooted prejudices. Serious consideration should be given to the employment of exceptionally well qualified, outstanding members of the Negro race who enjoy a position of prominence and influence in their respective communities.

3. The only set policy that can be established is that membership in the Negro race does not, per se, disbar an individual

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(SC)P14-2/EN3-10
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from employment by the Naval Intelligence Service. The purpose of this letter is to direct thought along the channels touched upon above, in order that the ideas of the Navy Department may be known and that the best representatives of the race may be chosen in the event that need for their services is recognized and desired.

/s/ F. J. Horne

F. J. HORNE

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