

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM TO Mr. Gael Sullivan

April 20, 1948

Subject: The Negro Vote

cc: Mr. Clark Clifford

Jack Ewing last night gave us a shocking report on the Negro vote in New York City. I had seen polls to the effect that from 20% to 30% of the Negro voters were going to vote for Wallace, but he reported interviews with what he said were the two best ward leaders in Harlem and in Brooklyn, both of whom said about 75% of their voters were going to vote for Wallace.

It seems to me that the Negro vote is one that it is within our power to salvage. Here are some steps which have been suggested to me in discussions with Philleo Nash and young Negro leaders of the caliber of George Weaver.

(1) Congressman Dawson or whomever else you have in mind to head up the Negro group for the campaign might be told that he was going to lead it. If that were understood now, the feeling is that he could begin to get his group lined up and preliminary steps could be taken.

(2) The first preliminary step, they feel, would be the taking on of someone to handle the Negro press. They mean by that not just seeing that Committee releases get to the large Negro papers, but that feature stories be dug up, written up, and planted showing the things the Administration is doing for the Negroes and making other points of interest to the Negro community. There is a tremendous story in the work that is being done by the Housing Agency in Negro housing, and it has never gotten adequate play.

(3) Of course, the two things on top of their agenda are the Executive Order promised by the President in his Report on Civil Rights for an FEPC for the Executive branch of the Government, and the ending of discrimination in the Armed Services. I gather that there is a great deal of feeling that the issuance of the Executive Order would create another Southern revolt, and that is why it is being held up. I do not know whether or not anyone has sounded out the Southern leaders to see if this objection is valid. As regards the second point, the heat may be taken off this somewhat by the meeting of Negro leaders which Secretary Forrestal is calling in the near future to discuss the problem of Negroes in the Armed Services. The military objection to it is that with such an order they fear an immediate falling off of volunteers from the Southern States, which are the best source of recruits for the Army.

The judicious use of appointments, like that of Bill Hastie, is of course tremendously effective. Are there any appointments coming up that you know of, particularly in the large metropolitan areas where the depredations of the Wallaceites are particularly severe? I understand there is a bill in to create another Federal judgeship in eastern Pennsylvania, but that runs up against the difficulty of Senate confirmation which Bill

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still another Southern revolt.

It might be well worthwhile to sit down with the Senator and Jack Redding and review what we can do in this sector in the immediate future.



William L. Batt, Jr. .

WLS:vw

W.C. Hoff, D.C.

11/19/20