

February 8, 1950

93-B

Dear Mr. Lee:

In acknowledging your letter of December 28, 1949, I desire to explain that the delay is due to the fact that I referred your communication to the Secretary of Defense.

I am informed that appropriate response has been made to inquiries concerning racial situations in the Army. I understand that you have been furnished, in another connection, copies of the January 16, 1950 Army policy statement on "Utilization of Negro Manpower."

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Needless to say, your interest in our continuing effort to assure equality of treatment and opportunity to all members of the Armed Services is deeply appreciated.

x1285-C

Very sincerely yours,

(Sgd) HARRY S. TRUMAN

Mr. J. Oscar Lee, ^x
Executive Secretary,
The Federal Council of the Churches
of Christ in America, Inc.,
297 Fourth Avenue,
New York 10, N. Y.

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

FEB 8 1950

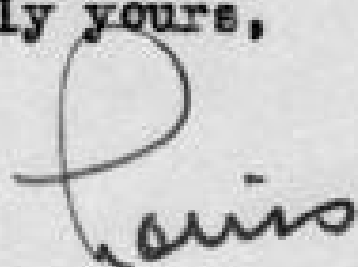
Dear Bill,

Attached, in response to your recent request, is a suggested draft of a letter from the President to Mr. Lee.

In this general connection, two letters covering this same field, both of them addressed to the President, were recently forwarded to us by Dave Niles.

With kindest personal regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,



Honorable William D. Hassett
Secretary to the President
The White House

Enclosures

D R A F T

Dear Mr. Lee:

Your letter of December 28, 1949, has been brought to the attention of the Secretary of Defense.

I am informed that appropriate response has been made to inquiries concerning racial situations in the Army. I understand that you have been furnished, in another connection, copies of the January 16, 1950 Army policy statement on "Utilization of Negro Manpower".

Your interest in the effort to assure equality of treatment and opportunity to all members of the Armed Services is appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ HARRY S. TRUMAN

D R A F T

Incl. 1

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January 13, 1950

Respectfully referred to the Secretary of Defense for the preparation of appropriate reply for the President's signature.

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WILLIAM D. HASSETT
Secretary to the President

wdh-mw

Let. to Pres., 12-28-49 from

J. Oscar Lee
Executive Secretary
The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America
297 Fourth Ave.
New York 10, N. Y.

On Oct. 29, 1949, Sen. Langer, at request of Committee Against Jim Crow in Military Service & Training, wrote office of Secy. Johnson asking that a commission be permitted to visit Amer. Zone of Germany to prepare a factual report on current racial practices in the Armed Forces. This commission would be composed of members of Congress, church representatives, & rep. of labor, edu. & minority group organizations. Mr. Langer did not receive a prompt and definitive reply from office of Secy. Johnson, a fact which a number of papers have pointed out editorially. Urges Pres. to take positive action in overcoming technical objections which Army officialdom or others might raise to the proposed investigation.

See 746

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America

CABLE ADDRESS "FEDCIL"

INCORPORATED

TELEPHONE GRAMERCY 5-3475

297 Fourth Avenue
New York 10, N. Y.

Department of Race Relations

December 28, 1949

BISHOP JOHN S. STAMM
PRESIDENT
MRS. DOUGLAS HORTON
VICE-PRESIDENT
HARPER SIBLEY
TREASURER
REV. SAMUEL MCCREA CAVERT
GENERAL SECRETARY
ROSWELL P. BARNES
J. QUINTER MILLER
ASSOCIATE GENERAL SECRETARIES

CLEO W. BLACKBURN
JOHN H. IVES
CO-CHAIRMEN
J. OSCAR LEE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
THOMAS C. ALLEN
CO-SECRETARY

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

October 29, 1949, Senator Langer, at the request of the Committee Against Jim Crow in Military Service and Training, wrote to the office of Mr. Louis Johnson, Secretary of Defense asking that a commission be permitted to visit the American Zone of Germany to prepare a factual report on current racial practices in the Armed Forces. This commission, Senator Langer pointed out, would be composed of members of Congress and representatives of church, labor, educational and minority group organizations. #

Mr. Langer did not receive a prompt and definitive reply from the office of the Secretary of Defense, a fact which a number of newspapers have pointed out editorially.

We bring these facts to your attention because we are aware of your great concern about the civil rights program when Congress reconvenes. The elimination of segregation from the military services which requires no Congressional action, can be put into effect immediately. So long as the Department of Defense ignores such a request the question always remains: Is racial discrimination so bad in the Army of Occupation in Germany that it cannot bear the light of investigation?

Since several other groups in which civilians were represented, have gone on missions to the European area using government transportation, we urge you to take positive action in overcoming technical objections which Army officialdom or others might raise to the proposed investigation. Your pronouncements in the past indicate that you would want to facilitate such an inquiry so that this question can be fully understood by the public.

Sincerely yours,

J. Oscar Lee
J. Oscar Lee
Executive Secretary

JOLrlp

28th Anniversary, Race Relations Sunday, February 12, 1950 . . . Marking Brotherhood Month
Incl. 2

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