

Phil Randolph

1285-0

April 25, 1950.

MEMO FOR HONORABLE JOHN STEELMAN:

Dear John:

This finally has reached my desk. Probably by now you have heard from Secretary Tobin, who agrees with me that he too hopes the President will reconsider and send the requested letter.

*Filed by  
M. Niles  
6-29-51  
EF.*

I am willing to admit that Phil Randolph has misbehaved occasionally, but fortunately he is not in the Paul Robeson class and the members of the Union, which is a respected AFL Union, should not be penalized. What particularly appeals to us practical guys, and of course would not influence you academicians, is the fact that next September is not very far from next November.

DAVID K. NILES  
Administrative Assistant  
to the President

Randolph

February 9, 1950

Dear Mr. Randolph:

I have given much thought to the matters contained in your letter of January 19th, and have discussed the matter with both the President and the Secretary of Defense. Based on my own investigation of the matters referred to in your letter, and on the discussions referred to above, it does not seem to me feasible to provide the military air transportation which you suggest for a Commission of Inquiry such as that which you describe. X1285

#  
As you know, the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services has been actively engaged in substantially the same sort of inquiry as that which you contemplate, and as a result of its activity, coupled with the work going forward in this field in the Department of Defense itself, substantial progress has been made by the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force - the most recent indication of this progress being Army Special Regulation 600-629-1, issued January 16, 1950.

In addition to the current work which is going forward in this field, there have been several other inquiries in recent years - including a tour of the United States Occupied Zones of Germany and Austria by a group of Negro newspaper publishers, in April of 1948; a trip by a number of church leaders, including Bishop W. J. Walls of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in 1947; and an inquiry by a delegation from the Negro Newspaper Publishers Association in 1946. The 1946 report, which was submitted to Secretary of War Patterson, was signed by Mr. Frank L. Stanley; Mr. Dowdal H. Davis, Jr.; and Mr. William O. Walker. Bishop Walls submitted his 1947 report to Secretary of the Army Kenneth Royall, and the 1948 report - also submitted to Secretary Royall - was signed by Mr. Dowdal H. Davis, Mr. Clifford Mackay, Mr. Louis E. Martin, Mr. William G. Nunn, Mr. Frank L. Stanley, Mr. Carter Wesley and Mr. Thomas W. Young.

In your letter of January 19th, you suggest the possibility of creating an ad hoc Congressional Committee, to constitute the proposed Commission of Inquiry - with the Congressional members to be aided by civilian consultants. It is my understanding that

DKN

Secretary Johnson has supplied you with copies of current regulations applicable to Congressional travel on military aircraft. I think that it is clear from these regulations that the Chairman of a Congressional Committee could request transportation by military aircraft for the purpose you have in mind, and, if a Congressional Committee were to take such a trip, the Committee could be accompanied by such staff members and consultants as the Chairman of the Committee might designate - subject, of course, to the provisions of the applicable regulations which have already been made available to you.

Of course, the creation of a Congressional Committee would be a matter for the Congress itself to decide.

Cordially,

DAVID K. NILES  
Administrative Assistant  
to the President

Mr. A. Philip Randolph  
Co-Chairman  
Committee Against Jim Crow in Military Service  
and Training  
Suite 706  
112 East 19th Street  
New York 3, New York

x 93-13



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

7 February 1950

Dear Dave,

In response to your memorandum of February 1, I am attaching a suggested draft of a letter from you to Mr. A. Philip Randolph. I think that such a letter would be preferable to anything that I might write to the Reynolds-Randolph team -- particularly in the light of Mr. Reynolds' letter of December 19 to Secretary Johnson, in which I am described as "your white special assistant from Alabama." Since Mr. Reynolds' letter of December 19 is equally complimentary to Mr. James Evans, who is described as a person "of venal duplicity", I doubt that any useful purpose would be served by any letter which Mr. Evans might sign -- and for that reason it is my recommendation that the letter to Mr. Randolph be signed by you.

I am also enclosing, at your request, a draft of a suggested letter to Mr. Elmer W. Henderson.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marx Leva".

Marx Leva

Honorable David Niles  
Administrative Assistant  
to the President  
The White House

D R A F T

Dear Mr. Randolph:

I have given much thought to the matters contained in your letter of January 19, and have discussed the matter with both the President and the Secretary of Defense. Based on my own investigation of the matters referred to in your letter, and on the discussions referred to above, it does not seem to me feasible to provide the military air transportation which you suggest for a Commission of Inquiry such as that which you describe.

As you know, the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services has been actively engaged in substantially the same sort of inquiry as that which you contemplate, and as a result of its activity, coupled with the work going forward in this field in the Department of Defense itself, substantial progress has been made by the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force — the most recent indication of this progress being Army Special Regulation 600-629-1, issued January 16, 1950.

In addition to the current work which is going forward in this field, there have been several other inquiries in recent years — including a tour of the United States Occupied Zones of Germany and Austria by a group of Negro newspaper publishers, in April of 1948; a trip by a number of church leaders, including Bishop W. J. Walls of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in 1947; and an inquiry by a delegation from the Negro Newspaper

Publishers Association in 1946. The 1946 report, which was submitted to Secretary of War Patterson, was signed by Mr. Frank L. Stanley; Mr. Dowdal H. Davis, Jr.; and Mr. William O. Walker. Bishop Walls submitted his 1947 report to Secretary of the Army Kenneth Royall, and the 1948 report -- also submitted to Secretary Royall -- was signed by Mr. Dowdal H. Davis, Mr. Clifford Mackay, Mr. Louis E. Martin, and Mr. William G. Nunn, Mr. Frank L. Stanley, Mr. Carter Wesley, <sup>and</sup> Mr. Thomas W. Young.

In your letter of January 19, you suggest the possibility of creating an ad hoc Congressional Committee, to constitute the proposed Commission of Inquiry -- with the Congressional members to be aided by civilian consultants. It is my understanding that Secretary Johnson has supplied you with copies of current regulations applicable to Congressional travel on military aircraft. I think that it is clear from these regulations that the Chairman of a Congressional Committee could request transportation by military aircraft for the purpose you have in mind, and, if a Congressional Committee were to take such a trip, the Committee could be accompanied by such staff members and consultants as the Chairman of the Committee might designate -- subject, of course, to the provisions of the applicable regulations which have already been made available to you.

*substantive* [I shall be glad to discuss this entire subject with you in *omit* greater detail at any time.]

Sincerely yours,

DAVID K. NILES  
Administrative Assistant  
to the President

D R A F T

Dear Mr. Henderson:

In connection with your letter of January 18, addressed to President Truman, I am taking the liberty of quoting the following excerpts from a letter which Secretary of Defense Johnson recently wrote to a member of the United States Senate, on this same general subject:

"In connection with your letter of November 30, it occurs to me that a brief recital of the facts might be in order. First, though, let me assure you that neither this office nor the Department of the Army has ever refused 'permission for a Commission of Inquiry to inspect current overseas racial practices of the armed forces in the American Zone of Germany'. Neither has a request to this effect 'gone unanswered for almost a month'.

"Since you have been misinformed on this score, I want to set the record straight . . .

"The first letter I received on this subject -- and the only letter received by me, prior to the arrival of your letter of November 30 -- was a letter dated November 23 and bearing the rubber-stamped signatures of Messrs. A. Philip Randolph and Grant Reynolds. Upon receipt of this letter, I directed Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Griffith to look into the matter thoroughly, for some of the statements contained in the letter of November 23 were extremely disturbing to me.

"Upon inquiry, Secretary Griffith found that an earlier letter on the same subject, signed by Senator Langer and addressed to Mr. James Evans of my staff, had been promptly acknowledged by Mr. Evans. This letter dealt with the possible creation, by the 'Committee Against Jim Crow in Military Service and Training' of a civilian commission of inquiry, to consist of members to be selected by the A. Philip Randolph-Grant Reynolds Committee.

"In addition to acknowledging this letter, Mr. Evans had visited Senator Langer's office, and, in the light of Senator Langer's absence from Washington, had discussed the entire matter with members of Senator Langer's staff. Mr. Evans had

also made a personal trip to New York, in order to discuss the proposal at first-hand with Mr. Grant Reynolds, Co-Chairman of the 'Committee Against Jim Crow in Military Service and Training.'

"The simple fact of the matter is this: we have been asked to provide transportation by military aircraft for a commission of inquiry which a private group wishes to establish. I am sure that you will recall my exchange of correspondence with Senator Thomas in September, with respect to the use of military aircraft. At that time, I issued a press release which read as follows:

"For trips that are in the national interest and necessary to the conduct of Government business, military aircraft may be used by authorized officials of the Federal Government. This applies to officials of the Department of Defense to the same extent, and in the same manner, that it applies to officials of other Government agencies.

"The more detailed statement of policy on this subject, which was promulgated on 31 December 1948, remains in effect. Among other things, this policy provides as follows: "Requests for travel, without reimbursement, by members of the Congress or high government officials, whose travel is primarily of official concern to the National Military Establishment (now the Department of Defense) should be screened and approved by the Chairman of the Congressional Committee (or military subcommittee, in the case of the Appropriations Committees) upon which the member of Congress is serving or, in the case of officials of other government agencies, the head of the governmental department to which the official is attached, and the request then forwarded, preferably in writing, by such Committee Chairman or department head . . . "

"The requests referred to in the passage set out above will be acted on as speedily as possible, and on a just and equitable basis. The statement of a Committee Chairman or department head that a trip is in the national interest and necessary to the conduct of Government business will normally be a sufficient basis for approval of the requested trip.

"Where a trip is in the national interest and necessary to the conduct of Government business but is not primarily of official concern to the Department of Defense, normal governmental appropriation and expenditure procedures apply, and in such cases the Department of Defense is reimbursed by the department or agency primarily concerned with the trip."



"The proposed commission of inquiry is not eligible for travel on military aircraft, within the terms of our existing regulations. We have followed a consistent policy in this regard, and will continue to do so.

"If a committee of the Congress should itself desire 'to inspect current overseas racial practices of the armed forces in the American Zone of Germany' and should the Chairman of the Committee request transportation for the purpose in accordance with the regulations presently in effect, we would of course deal with the matter on precisely the same footing that we would deal with any other Congressional request for transportation. A request that we furnish transportation to a private group, however, is a request which we must necessarily deny, in accordance with the procedures which I reiterated in my statement of September 6, and which Secretary of Defense Forrestal originally promulgated in his directive of December 31, 1948.

"I am enclosing for your information two copies of the press release of September 6, together with two copies of my letter of September 1 to Senator Thomas, on the general subject of Congressional travel by military aircraft.

"If there should be any further information which I can supply on this matter, please let me know. I have dealt with the matter at considerable length for I do not want you to be the victim of misinformation.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ LOUIS JOHNSON"

I am also enclosing a copy of Army Special Regulation 600-629-1, as issued on January 16 of this year. This revised Army Regulation represents one of the products of the cooperative effort of the Department of the Army and the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, of which the Honorable Charles Fahy is Chairman.

I believe that the excerpts quoted above from Secretary Johnson's letter will give you an accurate picture of the situation with respect to the proposed Commission of Inquiry. In summing up, I would say that

there is no objection whatsoever to such a Commission of Inquiry, but neither is there any intention of providing free transportation on military aircraft to such a privately-organized commission. My primary reason, therefore, for enclosing Army Special Regulation 600-629-1 is to point out the current activities in this field which have resulted from the joint action of the Army and the President's Committee.

Sincerely yours,

David K. Niles  
Administrative Assistant  
to the President

Phil Randolph

February 1, 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR: Honorable Marx Leva  
Assistant Secretary of Defense

Dear Marx:

Mr. A. Philip Randolph and a group of his associates came in to see me during the recent Civil Rights mobilization. They feel very strongly about the need for inquiry into the treatment of Negro servicemen in Europe, and do not feel that Negroes were adequately represented in the many groups - editors, churchmen and others - who have been in Europe. x596

I wonder if you would be good enough to reply to the letter Mr. Randolph left with me. It occurs to me that a statement as to the number of inquiring groups, and Negro representation on them, might be helpful at this time. x93 mic

I am also enclosing a communication received by the President from Mr. Elmer W. Henderson, Director of the American Council on Human Rights.

DAVID K. NILES  
Administrative Assistant  
to the President

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COMMITTEE AGAINST JIM CROW IN MILITARY SERVICE AND TRAINING

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BELFORD V. LAWSON, JR.  
JAMES M. NABRY, JR.

January 19, 1950

Mr. David Hiles  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Hiles:

In fulfillment of your request at our conference with you yesterday, I am submitting the following.

Because of repeated Negro press dispatches from the American Zone of Germany we believe, as do many other liberal and church organizations, that an objective and thorough investigation should promptly be made of the treatment of Negro servicemen in the occupying armed services in Europe. ~~We feel that a written report should then be submitted to the President in terms of degree of implementation of his Executive Order of July 26, 1948.~~

We favor an ad hoc Congressional committee -- selected from members of the House and Senate who are vitally concerned that America's foreign policy not be damaged by undemocratic practices in the armed services -- and for a rounded investigation we believe it would be essential for civilian consultants, of the caliber of Henry Epstein and of John Finerty of the Civil Liberties Union, to be included and provided with military air transportation. We previously informed the Defense Department that Life magazine was, and still is, willing to assign Earl Brown to cover the investigating group, and other publications have agreed to assign reporters.

I appreciate your graciousness in agreeing to work this matter out so that we shall not have to request an appointment directly with the President. As the Liberal Party wrote to Mr. Johnson, it is essential that the public not reach the conclusion that the Defense Department is attempting to conceal conditions abroad.

X 144-A'R

apr/k  
enclosure

Cordially yours,

*A. Philip Randolph*  
A. Philip Randolph  
Co-Chairman

X