

ELEANOR CLUBS

New York, N.Y.
September 29, 1942

These clubs are an actual fact. They have been started at Washington and have spread out like a fan to other sectors. It seems as though some pressure has been put upon the F.B.I. not to dig into these very deep because Mrs. F.D.R. issued a statement that the F.B.I. had investigated them and there was nothing to it.

Eleanor has been playing ball with that crowd of negroes that Congressman Dies accuses of being Communists. We mean Mary Bethune, William Pickens, Ben Davis, and a few others hanging around Washington.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

This was originated at: Memphis, Tennessee File No.: 100-1535

Report Made at: Memphis, Tennessee

Date when made: 11/13/42

Period for which made: 11-3, 5-42

Report made by: JCS

Title: ELEANOR ROOSEVELT CLUB OF NEGRO WOMEN
Jackson, Tennessee

Character of Case: Internal Security - I

Synopsis of Facts:

Investigation based upon report by confidential informant that Negro women of Jackson, Tennessee were forming a club whose slogan was "not a cook in the kitchen by Christmas" resulted negatively. Original informant states that there was no basis for such a report.

- C -

Details: Investigation in this case is predicted upon information furnished to this office by Confidential Informant A who advised that information had been received by that informant to the effect that the negro women of Jackson, Tennessee had organized an Eleanor Roosevelt Club. Membership was reported in this club to be ten cents a week.

It was further stated by the informant that a negro cook who had worked for a _____ on _____ Street in Jackson, Tennessee for some time had resigned recently, stating she was a member of this club and that the slogan of this group was "not a cook in the kitchen by Christmas." The initials of the _____ referred to and the house number were not given.

AT JACKSON, TENNESSEE

A check of the Jackson, Tennessee City Director for 1942 lists only one family by the name of _____ residing on _____ Street in Jackson.

_____ was contacted and stated that she had no maid and that she knew of no such incident as that referred to.

The writer then recontacted Confidential Informant A who stated he would endeavor to get further information concerning this matter from his original source of information.

Subsequent, Confidential Informant A advised that he had learned that the person who was supposed to have had the negro maid in question was _____, Jackson, Tennessee.

Upon being contacted, _____ stated that she had recently fired her maid but was at a loss to give any indication of how the rumor concerning the maid's alleged statement regarding the Eleanor Roosevelt Club had started. She advised definitely that no such incident had occurred.

In view of the above, no further investigation in this matter is being conducted and this case is being closed upon authorization of the Special Agent in Charge.

- CLOSED -

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Originated at: Washington, D.C.
File No.: 100-11347
Request Made at: Washington, D.C.
Date when Made: 1/25/43
Period for which made: 1/9/43
Report made by: CJK:MB

Title: "Eleanor Clubs"
Character of Case: Internal Security - C

Synopsis of Facts: Several informants have indicated existence of so-called "ELEANOR CLUBS" organized by negro maids. According to some informants purpose of clubs is to discontinue use of negroes as servants, while other informants indicate purpose to have servants dine with families they serve. No definite indication that such groups exist and stories apparently originate through widespread rumors.

- P -

DETAILS: AT WASHINGTON, D.C.

This investigation is predicated on the complaint of _____ to state that his wife, _____ and himself had heard quite a bit about the existence of so-called "ELEANOR CLUBS." According to the informant, several sources had mentioned to his wife and himself that negroes were organizing "ELEANOR CLUBS" whose motto was "No colored maid in the kitchen by Christmas." The informant advised that he did not know whether these sources were repeating rumors which they had heard or whether they had definite knowledge of the existence of such clubs. _____ had told her husband that a woman taking the school census had made some remarks about those clubs. The informant also furnished the names of _____, Washington, D.C., and _____ Silver Springs, Maryland, as sources from which he had heard of the clubs.

_____ was accordingly interviewed with regard to his knowledge concerning such organizations. He said that _____ Tacoma Park, Maryland, had had a negro maid named ANNIE. _____ advised that he had been impressed with the consideration _____ had shown to ANNIE over a long period of time. He said that _____ came from Staunton, Virginia and appeared to understand negroes. He related that she had secured the

services of a physician whenever ANNIE had been ill and had also had him look to her spiritual needs. Despite the fact that ANNIE had received every attention from _____ he said, the maid had become rebellious and sullen and eventually quit. He advised that he learned through _____ that ANNIE had been a member of a so-called "ELEANOR CLUB" whose motto was "No colored maid in the kitchen by Christmas." _____ was unable to furnish any further information with regard to the matter, but suggested that _____ would be able to furnish complete details.

It should be noted that prior to the receipt of this complaint the Bureau advised the Washington Field office under date of September 30, 1942 that information had been received from _____ through his wife, _____ relative to the possible existence of such a club in the City of Washington. _____ had said that he heard through a fellow employee at the Radio Research Department of the Naval Research Laboratory that a neighbor of _____, the fellow employee, had had a maid who was a member of this organization.

This information was to the effect that the neighbor lady told her maid to prepare places for the evening dinner for four people. Upon examining the setting of the table she notices there were five places arranged and when she asked the maid the reason for setting a fifth place rather than the four she was advised by the maid that the maid was a member of an "ELEANOR CLUB" and that she was to eat with the guests that evening.

As shown in the report of _____ dated November 20, 1942 at Washington, D.C., in the case entitled "FOREIGN INSPIRED AGITATION AMONG THE AMERICAN NEGROES IN THE WASHINGTON FIELD DIVISION, INTERNAL SECURITY - C" both _____ and _____ were interviewed in connection with this matter, but neither were able to furnish any additional information. _____ reluctantly advised that he had heard of the incident through his mother who had in turn learned of it from _____, N.W.

_____ accordingly was questioned concerning the matter, but she said that she had never heard of the story. The only incident she could recall which might have given rise to the story was that a few years before she had employed a negro boy whose name and whose present whereabouts she could not then recall, who had said that some white people would permit him to eat with the family. _____ advised that she had not believed the boy, whom she knew to be an inveterate liar, but had questioned him about the matter. He had replied that a family living next door to _____ would permit the boy to eat with them as he was not employed as their servant. _____ said that she knew that such was not the case and had dismissed the matter from her mind. She could not

account for the story reported by _____ whose identity was not reviewed, unless it had originated with the incident just related by her.

Even prior to the above report, _____, N.W., reported to _____ on July 24, 1942 the existence of some such club. According to this informant, who was not considered entirely reliable, the members of the so-called "ELEANOR CLUBS" had agreed to quit their employment, if any of their employers or their friends made a slurring reference to either the President or his wife. This informant was unable to give any further information with regard to the organizations, and no further investigation was conducted on the basis of her allegation.

It is also noted in the report of _____, Atlanta, Georgia, dated October 16, 1942, in the case entitled "ELEANOR UNION, INTERNAL SECURITY" that a complaint was received at LaGrange, Georgia that a negro cook had quit her job and stated that she had been ordered to do so by the "ELEANOR UNION" and that she had signed a pledge in her own blood and that any negro who took her job would be beat up by members of the group. A complete investigation of this matter as shown in this report revealed that the entire story was false as far as its having occurred at LaGrange, Georgia and that the story had apparently originated at Washington, D.C. and Birmingham, Alabama.

With regard to the origin of the story, _____ at LaGrange Woman's College, stated that while she was visiting a niece in Marietta, Pennsylvania, whose name she refused to divulge, she had attended a bridge party at a neighbor's home. She could not recall the name of the neighbor, but stated that at the party a _____ or a _____ she was not sure which, had told her that the wife of a retired Naval Officer in Washington, D.C. had said that her negro cook had suddenly quit her job. When asked for the reason for leaving the cook had said that she was a member of the "ELEANOR UNION" and that since on the previous night the Naval Officer's wife had guests who ridiculed the negroes it was her obligation to quit her job in compliance with the pledge which she had signed in blood. _____ stated that this story came to her in July, 1942, and that while she was returning to Georgia from Pennsylvania she went through Charlotte, North Carolina where she heard a similar story.

In view of the indefinite origin of this last mentioned story, no effort was made to investigate it in this Field Division. It would appear, however, that the stories of the so-called "ELEANOR CLUBS" are the result of widespread rumors without foundation and fact. An effort will be made, however, to substantiate the existence of such an organization wherever any specific complaint is received.

