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**FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**

**RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT**

**PART 1 OF 1**

**BUFILE NUMBER: 100-157464**

*Hydrogaster fil.*

WAR DEPARTMENT  
Military Intelligence Service  
Washington

NOV 2 1942

Subject: Letter of Transmittal.  
To: Lt. Col. J. Edgar Hoover  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Department of Justice

The attached communications are forwarded for your information and such action as you consider advisable.

For the Chief, Military Intelligence Service:

*John T. Bissell*  
J. T. BISSELL  
Colonel, General Staff,  
Asst. Executive Officer, M. I. S.

Enclosures:

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100-157464-1



October 13th 1942

Mr. J. Edgar Hoover  
Director  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

I beg to call to your attention books by one Richard Wright designed to stir racial dissension in America confining my charges to one entitled "12,000,000 Black Voices". Its entire contents are designed to destroy the morale of an important percent of American citizens under call to the armed forces of the United States; In particular I refer to page 143 in which Japan is held up as the possible saviour of the colored race, this by inference plays directly into the hands of our enemies in arms, therefore constituting a treasonable utterance in time of war.

This publication has had a large circulation among colored people and other enemies within the United States; Responsible for serious violations of law and order in all parts of the Country, especially where there are large colored populations.

Material of this character in the hands of designing persons can lead to many forms of sabotage and result in a general breakdown of morale bound to be used to corrupt national unity so necessary in an all out "win the War" effort by America and her allies.

Two other books by this writer are equally dangerous to national welfare the names of which I will gladly supply upon request from your office.

In addition to the books, this ties in with one of the most dangerous appeals to racial dissension, of alien origin, being used by subversive forces at work in America.

Very truly yours

LEAGUE

OCT 14 1942

RECEIVED

David P. Harbo  
215 East 17th Street  
New York, N.Y.



# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1  
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

NY FILE NO. **100-41574 JMG**

REPORT MADE AT <b>NEW YORK, NEW YORK</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>2-9-43</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>2-2, 3, 5, 11-43</b>	REPORT MADE BY <b>[REDACTED]</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>b7c</b></span>
TITLE  <b>RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE  <b>INTERNAL SECURITY SEDITION</b>

**SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:**

Subject born in Hatches, Mississippi, 1909, and at age of 15 ran away from orphan asylum and then bummed his way throughout the country. Subject employed by WPA from 1-3-38 to 5-17-39. Subject the author of "Native Son", a novel which was later adapted into a play by same name, and this play was included in "The Best Plays of 1940 and 1941". Information regarding subject's book, "Twelve Million Black Voices" set out.

AGENCY 100-41574  
REQ. REC'D 2-10-43  
REP'T FORW. 2-10-43  
BY [Signature]

- C -

**REFERENCE:**

(Bureau File Number 100-157464)  
Bureau Letter to New York dated December 9, 1942.

**DETAILS:**

A review of the indices of the Public Library of New York City, located at 5th Avenue and 42nd Street, reflected that the subject's true name is **RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT** and that he was born in 1909. The indices also reflected that the subject wrote the following books: "Fire and Cloud", "Twelve Million Black Voices", "Native Son", and "Uncle Tom's Children".

Mr. M. B. TOLSON, in the 1939 issue of the "Modern Quarterly", Volume Eleven, Number Five, in reviewing the works of the subject, stated that **RICHARD WRIGHT** was born "on a broken down plantation near Hatches, Mississippi, a State which leads the Union in illiteracy, Christianity and mobocracy. His family travelled from town to town like grub-worms. His father got tired of his poverty-ravaged household and deserted the family. Paralysis struck his mother down and he entered an orphan asylum but ran off at fifteen. In Memphis he haunted Beale Street and later he bummed his way all over the country, fighting, stealing, lying. He'd reached only the eighth grade in school. Somewhere

APPROVED AND FORWARDED [Signature] SPECIAL AGENT

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- ⑤ - Bureau
- 1 - Capt. R. C. MacFall, ONI
- 1 - Col. S. V. Constant, G-2
- 2 - New York

**100-157464-2**

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DATE 6-25-81 BY [Signature]

NY 100-41674

along the gutted road it dawned upon him that he needed an education. And then, whether digging ditches or clerking in the post office, he devoured the contents of newspapers and magazines as well as books that came his way."

[REDACTED] advised the writer that the subject had been employed by the WPA on a Federal Writers' Project from January 3, 1938, to May 17, 1939, when he resigned to accept private employment. At this time subject was residing at 809 Saint Nicholas Avenue, New York City.

"The Best Plays of 1940 and 1941" by BURNS MANTLE included the subject's play, "Native Son", which was produced from the subject's novel by the same name.

Mr. BROOKS ATKINSON in the New York Times had the following to say about the subject's play, "Native Son": "In the drama Mr. GREEN and Mr. WRIGHT work in a more objective style. Without the subjective background their defense of Bigger Thomas's ghastly crime in the court scene sounds like generalized pleading. It lacks the stinging enlightenment of the last third of Mr. WRIGHT's novel. But that completes this column's bill of exceptions to the biggest American drama of the season."

The novel, "Twelve Million Black Voices", which was written by the subject, was published by the Viking Press in New York City in October, 1941, and this book is divided into four parts: (1) Our Strange Birth; (2) Inheritors of Slavery; (3) Death on the City Pavements; and (4) Men in the Making. In the foreword, Mr. WRIGHT states "while this novel purports to render a broad picture of the processes of negro life in the United States, intentionally it does not include in its considerations those areas of negro life which comprise the so-called 'talented tenth' or the isolated islands of mulatto leadership which are still to be found in many parts of the South or the growing and influential negro middle class professional and business men of the North who have, for the past twenty years or more, formed a sort of liaison corps between the whites and the blacks".

The reference letter reflected that on Page 143 of the above-mentioned novel, there was material that appeared to be seditious in nature; and for the benefit of the Bureau, the above-mentioned page is being quoted in full:

"There are millions of us and we are moving in all directions. All our lives we have been catapulted into arenas where, had we thought consciously of invading them, we would have hung back. A sense of constant change has stolen silently into our lives and has become operative in our personalities as a law of living.

NY 100-41674

"There are some of us who feel our hurts so deeply that we find it impossible to work with whites; we feel that it is futile to hope or dream in terms of American life. Our distrust is so great that we form intensely racial and nationalistic organizations and advocate the establishment of a separate state, a forty-ninth state, in which we black folk would live.

"There are even today among us groups that forlornly plan a return to Africa."

"There are others of us who feel the need of the protection of a strong nation so keenly that we admire the harsh and imperialistic policies of Japan and ardently hope that the Japanese will assume the leadership of the 'darker races'.

"As our consciousness changes, as we come of age, as we shed our folk swaddling clothes, so run our lives in a hundred directions.

"Today, all of us black folk are not poor. A few of us have money. We make it as the white folk make theirs, but our money-making is restricted to our own people. Many of us black folk have managed to send our children to school, and a few of our children are now professional and business men whose standards of living approximate those of middle-class whites. Some of us own small businesses; others devote their lives to law and medicine.

"But the majority of us still toil on the plantations, work in heavy industry, and labor in the kitchens of the Lords of the Land and the Bosses of the Buildings.

"The general dislocation of life during the depression caused many white workers to learn through chronic privation that they could not protect their standard of living so long as we blacks were excluded from their unions. Many hundreds of thousands of them found that they could not fight successfully for increased wages and union recognition unless we stood shoulder to shoulder with them. As a consequence, many of us have recently become members of steel, automobile, packing and tobacco unions."

The following quotations are found on Page 146 of the same book and is the last page of the novel:

"The differences between black folk and white folk are not blood or color, and the ties that bind us are deeper than those that separate us. The common road of hope which we all have travelled has brought us into a stronger kinship than any words, laws or legal claims."

"What do we black folk want? We want what others have, the right to share in the upward march of American life, the only life we remember or have

NY 100-41674

ever known. The Lord of the Land say: "We will not grant this!" We answer: "We ask you to grant us nothing. We are winning our heritage though our toll in suffering is great!" The Bosses of the Buildings say: "Your problem is beyond solution!" We answer: "Our problem is being solved. We are crossing the line you dared us to cross though we pay in the coin of death!" "

"The seasons of the plantation no longer dictate the lives of many of us; hundreds of thousands of us are moving into the sphere of conscious history."

"We are with the new tide. We stand at the crossroads. We watch each new procession. The hot wires carrying urgent appeals. Print compels us. Voices are speaking. Men are moving! And we shall be with them."

- CLOSED -

NY 100-41574

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANT

Special Agent [REDACTED] as mentioned in the report of  
New York, New York, dated February 9, 1943.  
is [REDACTED]

b2  
b7c  
b7D



## b7c

for

Director, FBI

RE: RICHARD WRIGHT  
INTERNAL SECURITY  
SEDITION

In reference to Bureau letter of January 20, 1943, (Bureau file 100-157464) requesting the status of the above entitled matter, this is to advise this case has been reassigned and placed in line for immediate investigation.

E. E. CONROY  
SAC

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MAR 5 1943

**b7c**



**Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
New York, New York**

**FCB  
100-41674**

**April 21, 1943**

**Director, F.B.I.**

**RE: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT  
CUSTODIAL DETENTION (C)  
SEDITION**

**Dear Sir:**

There are being transmitted herewith the original and one copy of the report of [REDACTED] dated April 18, 1943, setting out information concerning the captioned individual.

An investigation of the activities of this individual is presently being conducted by the New York Office and an investigative report setting out the results of this investigation will be submitted to the Bureau in the near future.

Two copies of [REDACTED] report are being retained in the appropriate files of the New York Office for information purposes.

**Very truly yours,**

**E. E. Conroy**  
**E. E. CONROY**  
**SAC**

**Enclosures**

**cc: NY File #65-10519**

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16 AUG 18 1960**

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Mr. Tolson	_____
Mr. E. A. Tamm	_____
Mr. Clegg	_____
Mr. Glavin	_____
Mr. Ladd	_____
Mr. Nichols	_____
Mr. Rosen	_____
Mr. Tracy	_____
Mr. Carson	_____
Mr. Coffey	_____
Mr. Hendon	_____
Mr. Kramer	_____
Mr. McGuire	_____
Mr. Quinn Tamm	_____
Mr. Nease	_____
Miss Gandy	_____

**b2  
b7D**

**b7D**

**2040  
6-9-77**

**A**

**4**

**b7C**

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XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

1 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b2, b7D with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Document(s) originating with the following government agency(ies) \_\_\_\_\_, was/were forwarded to them for direct response to you.

\_\_\_\_\_ Page(s) referred for consultation to the following government agency(ies); \_\_\_\_\_ as the information originated with them. You will be advised of availability upon return of the material to the FBI.

\_\_\_\_\_ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ For your information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:  
100-157464-4 enclosure

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X FOR THIS PAGE X  
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# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

NY FILE NO. **100-41674** **JK**

REPORT MADE AT <b>NEW YORK CITY</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>5/28/43</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>2/17, 3/1, 4/10, 5/6, 7/43</b>	REPORT MADE BY <b>[REDACTED] b7c</b>
TITLE <b>RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>CUSTODIAL DETENTION - C SEDITION</b>

**SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:**

**RICHARD WRIGHT**, popular negro writer and former reporter on Daily Worker, according to an article in Daily Worker on 4/13/41 by **RALPH WARNER**, is a Communist. Other articles in the Worker indicate **WRIGHT's** Communist tendencies. He himself in so many words admits his affiliation.

**[REDACTED]** Selective Service classification 3- A.

- C -

**REFERENCE:**

Bureau file 100-157464.

Report of Special Agent **[REDACTED]** dated February 9, 1943 at New York City.

**DETAILS:**

**AT NEW YORK.**

Inasmuch as a review of **RICHARD WRIGHT's** writings indicate he is at least a fellow traveller if not a member of the Communist Party, additional inquiry has been made and is being set out below.

With reference to the reference report where certain sections of **WRIGHT's** novel "Twelve Million Black Voices"

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COPIES OF THIS REPORT 5 - Bureau 1 - Capt. R.C. MacFall, ONI 1 - Col. S.V. Constant, G-2 3 - New York.	<div style="text-align: center;">15 MAY 21 1943 <b>b7c</b></div>
	<div style="text-align: center;">RECORDED</div> <div style="text-align: center;">INDEXED</div>
	EX - 32

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NY file  
100-41674

were set out as possibly falling within the violation of the sedition statute, a brief review of this book does not indicate that any other portion of the novel is of an sedition nature.

"Twelve Million Black Voices" is a fictitious story of the social conditions of the Negro in the United States from the first slave days to the present in which he discusses the progress of the Negro.

WRIGHT was also the author of the popular novel "Native Son" and when questioned by writers and critics why he created such a character as "Bigger", he explained same in an article which was published in "The Saturday Review" of June 1, 1940, page 18. He discussed pro and con what prompted him to write such a novel and to create such a character as "Bigger" from which, among other things, is taken the following excerpt:

"Another thought kept me from writing. What would my own white and black comrades in the Communist Party say."

From such a published statement, one would assume WRIGHT to be a member of the Party or at least a fellow traveller.

The American-Journal, New York daily newspaper of February 15, 1943 states that RICHARD WRIGHT was a former reporter on the Daily Worker. WRIGHT's picture appears in the "Negroes and the War", published and distributed by the Office of War Information.

The files of the New York office also reflect that RICHARD WRIGHT's name appears on the "Committee to Free Earl Browder", which list was published in the People's Voice, a New York Negro weekly newspaper issued March 21, 1942.

[redacted] advised that on March 6, 1942 WRIGHT's name appeared on the "American Committee to Save Refugees," and on September 18, 1942 was listed as one of the officers of the League of American Writers, advocating a second front in Europe.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

NY file  
100-41674

[REDACTED] b7D b2 b7D

It is noted that WRIGHT's name appeared frequently in the Daily Worker during 1941 and 1942. In an issue dated February 25, 1941, page 4, column 1, it is noted that RICHARD WRIGHT was listed along with EARL BROWDER, BEN GOLD and JOE WIRTH as one of the speakers at which time the Daily Worker celebrated MIKE GOLD's 25th anniversary, in the labor movement.

In an issue dated February 28, 1941 WRIGHT was listed as one of the writers who would greet THEODORE DREISER at a testimonial luncheon attended March 1, 1941 at the Commodore Hotel under the auspices of the American Council on Soviet Relations. Others to be present were JESSICA SMITH, editor of "Soviet Russia Today", CLIFFORD ORTS, Dr. JOHN A. KINGSBURY and others.

In an issue of March 19, 1941, page 5, column 7, WRIGHT greeted WILLIAM Z. FOSTER, National Chairman of the Communist Party on his 60th Birthday.

In an issue dated March 22, 1941 WRIGHT along with RUTH MCKENNEY, was reported to have accepted to serve on the Board of Honorary Chairmen of the May Day Committee.

In an issue of April 5, 1941, page 7, column 2, RICHARD WRIGHT's name appeared with other writers in what was known as the "Call to the 4th Congress of the League of America" to be held in New York City on June 6 and 8, 1941 to discuss how best writers can resist the trend toward war, what to do to restore the WPA and what to do in defense of culture.

In an issue dated April 13, 1941, the Sunday Worker, page 7, column 1, RALPH WARNER discussed the play "Native Son" and among other things admits that "Max", one of the characters in the play is symbolic of a Communist. "However, that nowhere in the play is he called a Communist but he is clearly a sympathiser." WARNER states however, that RICHARD WRIGHT is a Communist and the conception of Max and of his entire play is.

NY file  
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In an issue of April 21, 1941, page 1, there is an editorial which speaks about WRIGHT's stirring condemnation of the imprisonment of EARL BROWDER and of a long forward by JAMES W. FORD contained in WRIGHT's "Bright the Morning Star", a short story in pamphlet form printed by the International Publishers. FORD highly endorsed WRIGHT and the article also pertains to a part of a letter to the International Publishers by WRIGHT in which he says he wants no royalty for this work and those that are received are to accrue to the "Earl Browder Defense Fund."

In an issue dated June 9, 1941, page 1, WRIGHT's name appears among those of the Writers Congress who adopted a firm anti-war program.

In an issue dated July 24, 1941, page 7, column 3, it is noted that WRIGHT's name appears among the American writers who pledged full support to Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

A change of attitude of RICHARD WRIGHT and other writers is pointed out in that in early June they adopted a firm anti-war program and in July they advocated full support to the Soviet Union. Further, that Germany declared war on Russia on June 22, 1941.

In an issue dated August 18, 1941 WRIGHT appears on the Citizen's Committee to Free Earl Browder and in an issue dated August 11, 1941, page 9, WRIGHT states that HARRY BRIDGES is a friend of America and has become a symbol in America and that those who fight against him are enemies of America.

In an issue dated October 22, 1941, page 1, paragraph 1, WRIGHT's name appears as one of the members of a group of citizens calling for a release of EARL BROWDER.

On November 19, 1941, page 3, in the Sunday Worker, RICHARD WRIGHT was declared winner of the Spingarn medal for the writing of "Native Son." Also in this issue WRIGHT along with A. W. BERRY, Secretary of the Communist Party, Reverend ADAM CLAYTON FOWELL, Jr., and HORACE MARSHALL, Vice-President of the National Negro Congress, protested against police brutality and general economic conditions existent in Harlem.

In an issue dated February 13, 1942, page 7, column 4, a letter of WRIGHT's was published dealing with the controversy on music which letter is dated February 10, 1942 and begins as follows:

"Dear Comrade Sender Gerlin:"

WRIGHT complimented the Daily Worker and among other

NY file  
100-41674

things states that he would like to see letters from the public on "how can recruitment of negroes to the Communist Party be increased." This letter also stated that "The Communist Party is the only political party in America vitally concerned about culture and its problems."

It is also noted that in JAMES W. FORD's book "The Negro and the Democratic Front", on page 193, FORD states that he wants to "express publically the high appreciation of our Negro comrades and Negro people for the splendid contributions of RICHARD WRIGHT, LANGSTON HUGHES and other artists and musicians of our people."

On October 14, 1942 [REDACTED] advised that RICHARD WRIGHT, a former known Communist Party member, had split with the Party because of his dissatisfaction with the way the Party handled the Negro question.

b2  
b7D  
b7C

[REDACTED]  
327 Lafayette Street, Brooklyn, furnished the following information as reflected in the files of that board concerning WRIGHT.

He advised that WRIGHT's questionnaire was returned May 9, 1941 at which time WRIGHT resided at 473 West 104th Street, New York City. However, he presently resides at 7 Middagh Street, Brooklyn, New York. On May 28, 1941 WRIGHT was placed in 3-A classification because of collateral dependents. On July 1, 1942 his collateral dependency was removed and he was placed in classification 1-A.

On July 6, 1942 he was about to be inducted into the Army and he asked for a 90 day extension, which was granted. On November 2, 1942 a continuation of this extension was granted. On November 16, 1942 he was placed in 3-A in order to permit him an opportunity to take Volunteer Candidate Training, but was subsequently rejected.

The questionnaire reflects that WRIGHT was born September 4, 1906 at Natchez, Mississippi. His education was given as eight years of elementary school. He states his employment experience is that of a novelist, playwright, poet and newspaper reporter. He did not set forth his place of employment but advised that he was engaged as a writer of political and labor news from 1937 to 1938. This might possibly be the period that he was a reporter for the Daily Worker.

WRIGHT furnished a list of his writings to the Local Board. It was noted that "Uncle Tom's Children" according to WRIGHT was written by him and was later translated into Russian by the U.S.S.R. and issued in international literature.



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100-41674

His questionnaire further reflects that he was married March 10, 1941 at Coytesville, New Jersey. His dependents are given as that of his mother ELLA WRIGHT, [REDACTED] NATHAN WRIGHT, father, [REDACTED] LEON WRIGHT, brother, [REDACTED] and CLEO WRIGHT, sister-in-law at the same address. b7c

WRIGHT listed as property one house valued at \$3,000. [REDACTED] WRIGHT is divorced from his first wife, because on June 7, 1942 he listed his dependents as ELLEN WRIGHT, wife, age 29 and JULIA WRIGHT, two months, daughter, born April 12, 1942.

[REDACTED] advised that the file further reflects a letter from the Office of War Information, New York City, in which was transmitted a program as prepared for them by RICHARD WRIGHT. The records further reflected that WRIGHT has lived at the following addresses: b7c

467 Waverly Avenue, Brooklyn. (1940)

473 West 140th Street, New York City. (May 1941)

11 Revere Place, Brooklyn. (July 7, 1941)

7 Middagh Street, Brooklyn. (Present address) b7c

[REDACTED] advised that the Board's association with RICHARD WRIGHT had been very pleasant and that he had been very cooperative and prompt in his transactions with them.

A description of WRIGHT as furnished by [REDACTED] is as follows:

Age	34
Born	September 4, 1908, Natchez, Mississippi.
Height	5'7"
Weight	158 pounds
Build	Medium
Eyes	Brown
Hair	Black
Complexion	Dark
Race	Negro
Occupation	Writer
Marital status	Married
Criminal record	None
Scars or marks	None
Citizenship	American
Marital status	Married

No further investigation is being conducted and this case is considered closed. C L O S E D 17



NY file  
1674

IDENTITY OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANTS:

[REDACTED] mentioned in the report of Special Agent [REDACTED] dated May 28, 1943 at New York City, is a flimsy report from G-2, Governor's Island, and is being made an informant in view of the fact that the Bureau has expressed a desire not to have them mentioned in reports.

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b7D  
b7C

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] who is being made an Informant in accordance with a Bureau request.

Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
New York, New York

Mr. Tolson	.....
Mr. E. A. Tamm	.....
Mr. Clegg	.....
Mr. Coffey	.....
Mr. Glavin	.....
Mr. Ladd	.....
Mr. Nichols	.....
Mr. Rosen	.....
Mr. Tracy	.....
Mr. Carson	.....
Mr. Hendon	.....
Mr. Mumford	.....
Mr. Scarke	.....
Mr. Quinn Tamm	.....
Mr. Nease	.....
Miss Gandy	.....
Files	.....

DEC  
100-41674

September 14, 1943

Director, FBI

RE: RICHARD WRIGHT  
INTERNAL SECURITY (C)  
SECURITY MATTER

Dear Sir:

Enclosed are the original and one copy of the report of [REDACTED] received at this office on September 10, 1943 concerning [REDACTED] RICHARD WRIGHT, the famed colored novelist who is considered a key figure in this office.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Copies of instant report are being placed in the appropriate New York Files.

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S)

Very truly yours,

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E. E. CONROY  
SAC

153 AUG 20 1960



Enclosure

copy for K.Y. 65-22830

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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/lac

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SEP 17 1943

**Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
New York, New York**

Mr. Tolson	.....
Mr. E. A. Tamm	.....
Mr. Clegg	.....
Mr. Coffey	.....
Mr. Glavin	.....
Mr. Ladd	.....
Mr. Nichols	.....
Mr. Rosen	.....
Mr. Tracy	.....
Mr. Egan	.....
Mr. Gurnea	.....
Mr. Harbo	.....
Mr. Hendon	.....
Mr. Mumford	.....
Mr. Starke	.....
Mr. Quinn Tamm	.....
Mr. Nease	.....
Miss Gandy	.....

DEC  
100-41674

September 14, 1943

Director, FBI

RE: RICHARD WRIGHT  
INTERNAL SECURITY (C)  
SECURITY MATTER

Dear Sir:

Enclosed are the original and one copy of the report of [REDACTED] received by this office on September 10, 1943, concerning RICHARD WRIGHT the Colored novelist who is being considered a key figure in the New York Field Division.

[REDACTED]

Copies of instant report are being placed in the appropriate New York Files.

Very truly yours,

*E. E. Conroy*

E. E. CONROY  
SAC

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) 2046  
DATE 6-9-77

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100-157464-7

SEP 17 1943

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# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

NEW YORK, N. Y.

FILE NO. 100-15433

REPORT MADE AT <b>WASHINGTON, D. C.</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>6/9/44</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>5/27, 29/44</b>	REPORT MADE BY <b>[REDACTED]</b>
TITLE <b>③ RICHARD WRIGHT</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>S - C SECURITY MATTER - C</b>

**SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:**

[REDACTED] (c)

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY SLIP  
DATE 10-21-61

- RUC -

AGENCY 100-15433  
REC. REC'D 8-1-44  
REP'T FORW. 8-1-44  
BY [REDACTED]

**DETAILS:**

AT WASHINGTON, D. C.

[REDACTED]

A review of the indices of the Washington Field Office indicated that the person referred to [REDACTED] was undoubtedly a nationally prominent negro author by the name of RICHARD WRIGHT, who resides in New York City. It was found that numerous references to this RICHARD WRIGHT have been made in the Daily Worker over the course of years, and that information with regard to him has also been developed by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, Honorable MARTIN DIES, Chairman.

[REDACTED]

APPROVED AND FORWARDED <i>[Signature]</i>	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES
COPIES OF THIS REPORT DESTROYED 5 - Bureau 2 - New York AUG 20 1960 2 - Washington Field		<div style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">100-157414-8</div> <div style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">31</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> RECORDED INDEXED INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN OTHERWISE </div>
CLOSED EXT. BY <u>841B7/1</u> REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2 DATE OF REVIEW <u>8-25-81</u>		

WFO #100-15433

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

b1  
b7D  
b7C

[REDACTED] C

In view of the fact that RICHARD WRIGHT is reported to reside in New York City and inasmuch as there is no further investigation to be conducted with regard to him in Washington, D. C., the New York City office is being designated office of origin herein and this case is being considered referred upon completion to that office.

- REFERRED UPON COMPLETION TO THE OFFICE OF ORIGIN -

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

100-15433

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1  
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **NEW YORK, N. Y.**

NY FILE NO. **100-41674** **20**

REPORT MADE AT <b>NEW YORK, N. Y.</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>7/8/44</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>5/24; 6/1-3/44</b>	REPORT MADE BY <b>[REDACTED]</b>
TITLE <b>RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>INTERNAL SECURITY - C</b>

**SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:**

**KEY FIGURE**

Subject presently resides 89 Lefferts Place, Brooklyn, NY.  
Registered with SS LDB #178; classified 4F, 1/31/44.

**[REDACTED]**

AGENCY  
REC'D  
REF. FORM.  
BY

P

**REFERENCE:**

Bureau File No. 100-157464.  
Report of Special Agent **[REDACTED]**  
New York City.

dated 5/28/43 at

**DETAILS:**

Although it is noted that referenced report of Special Agent **[REDACTED]** was a Closing Report, in view of the fact that Subject is considered a key figure in Communist activities in the New York Field Division, this case was reopened and the activities of Subject have been followed.

**[REDACTED]**

APPROVED AND FORWARDED <b>[Signature]</b> SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES <b>100-157464 9</b>
COPIES OF THIS REPORT 5 - Bureau 1 - Col. S. V. Constant, D of I, 2SC 3 - New York	RECORDED
	INDEXED
COPY IN FILE	ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED DATE 8-22-85 BY 58161/2/85

52 JUL 20 1944 347



NY 100-41674

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

b7D

It has been ascertained that the Subject presently resides at 89 Lefferts Place, Apartment C23, Brooklyn 16, New York. Inquiry in the neighborhood of his former residence, Columbia Heights, at 7 Middagh Street, Brooklyn, New York, produced no information of value to this investigation.

[REDACTED]

b2  
b7D

As previously reported, Subject is registered with Selective Service Local Draft Board No. 178 and has Order No. 2025. On June 1st, 1944, Agent interviewed [REDACTED] who advised that Subject had been classified 4-F on January 31, 1944. His rejection by the armed forces on January 15, 1944 had been made with the noted reason: "psychoneurosis, severe, psychiatric rejection; referred to Local Board for further psychiatric and social investigation".

b7C

[REDACTED]

b7D

[REDACTED] b7c b7D

It appeared from Subject's contacts with his Local Board that his interest in the problem of the Negro has become almost an obsession and it was said that he apparently overlooks the fact that his own rise to success refutes many of his own statements regarding the impossibility of the Negro's improving his personal position. b7c

[REDACTED]

From all the information concerning Subject in publications and according to information from Informants in the New York Office, Subject is continuing his activities as a writer. In addition to his better known books he has also been engaged in the writing of skits and stories, most of which concern the Negro. The publicity which has been received by Subject WRIGHT is typified by the rather lengthy review of his life appearing in the volume "Current Biography, 1940" published by the H. W. Wilson Company. This volume states that RICHARD WRIGHT, Author, was born September 4, 1908 and his present address is care of HARPER & BROTHERS, 49 East 33rd Street, New York City. It refers to him as a brilliant young Negro writer whose collection of short stories "Uncle Tom's Children" won a \$500 prize competition in 1938 and whose book "Native Son" was the March, 1940 selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. Much of the article contains a review of the character and theme of that book.

The life of RICHARD WRIGHT, beginning with his birth, September 4, 1908, on a plantation 25 miles from Natchez, Mississippi, is summarized, as follows:

His father, NATHAN WRIGHT, was a mill worker and his mother, ELLEN WRIGHT, a country school teacher. The family was continually on the move so his education was very much neglected. When his mother was stricken with paralysis during the first world war, the Subject was sent to an uncle's house to live. WRIGHT is quoted as having stated that he did so much fighting, lying and school-cutting that he was sent back to his grandmother who predicted that he would end on the gallows. He was put in a 7th Day Adventist

NY 100-41674

School, taught by his aunt. At 15 he left home and went to Memphis and got a job as porter and messenger. During the subsequent years he worked his way all over the country working at any kind of job from ditch-digging to clerking in a post office. He drifted to Chicago where he had heard Negroes stood a better chance of getting jobs. He was a clerk for a while and in 1933 had a taste of politics. The review then quotes what is purportedly the Subject's own statement:

"I became an assistant precinct captain in the Republican Primary Election", he said, "I was promised a job. I didn't get it. Next time I became an assistant precinct captain for the Democrats and was promised a job, which I didn't get. So then I became a Red. Now I am what the papers refer to as a card-carrying Communist."

In 1935, WRIGHT was on the FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT in Chicago and had sold paper articles and some stories to the magazines. He came to New York in 1937 where he again got on the WRITERS' PROJECT. He wrote an essay on Harlem in the "New York Panorama". He also did some work on the "Daily Worker" and became a contributing editor of the "New Masses". In 1939, WRIGHT reportedly got a Guggenheim fellowship which enabled him to quit the Project and complete his novel "Native Son". He lived for some months during 1940 in Mexico but returned to the United States in November of 1940.

[REDACTED] b7E

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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NY 100-41674

UNDEVELOPED LEADS

NEW YORK FIELD DIVISION

At New York, N. Y. - Will follow and report  
activities of Subject.

NY 100-41674

IDENTITY OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANT

In the report of Special Agent [REDACTED]  
dated July 8, 1944 at New York, N. Y., the Confidential Informant is as  
follows:

[REDACTED]

A temporary informant symbol is used to further  
conceal the identity of this Informant. [REDACTED]

b7c

b2, b7c



**Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice**



IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER TO  
FILE NO. 100-241674

AHD

June 28, 1944

Director, FBI

**RICHARD WRIGHT**  
RE: **SECURITY MATTER**  
**INTERNAL SECURITY - C**

Dear Sir:

It is recommended that a Security Index card be prepared relative to the individual named below:

Name: **RICHARD WRIGHT**  
Aliases:

Residence Address: **89 Lefferts Place, Apartment C-23  
Brooklyn 16, New York**

Business Address: **None**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Native Born	<input type="checkbox"/> Alien	<input type="checkbox"/> Naturalized
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communist	<input type="checkbox"/> German	<input type="checkbox"/> Miscellaneous
<input type="checkbox"/> Fascist (Italian)	<input type="checkbox"/> Japanese	<input type="checkbox"/>

Date of Birth Sept. 4, 1908  
Place of Birth Natchez, Mississippi  
Entered U. S. \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
Naturalized (date) \_\_\_\_\_  
Naturalized (place and Court) \_\_\_\_\_

Very truly yours,

*E. E. Conroy*  
E. E. CONROY  
SAC

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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/bce

RECORDED

28 JUN 29 1944

61 JUL 8 1944

SAC-NYC  
6-4-44  
b7c

RECEIVED  
JUL 25 1944

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
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DATE 8-25-8 BY SP8 BJA

Mr. Tolson  
Mr. E. A. Tamm  
Mr. Clegg  
Mr. Coffey  
Mr. Glavin  
Mr. Ladd  
Mr. Nichols  
Mr. Rosen  
Mr. Tracy  
Mr. Mohr  
Mr. Carson  
Mr. Hendon  
Mr. Jones  
Mr. Quinn  
Mr. Nease

WASH FROM NEW YORK 2 28 1-14P

DIRECTOR URGENT

GAIN. RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT, IS-C. FOR THE BUREAU INFO ARTICLE IN  
TODAYS NY HERALD TRIBUNE ENTITLED "NEGRO AUTHOR CRITICIZES REDS AS IN-  
TOLERANT", STATES THAT RICHARD WRIGHT, AUTHOR OF "NATIVE SON" IN DIS-  
CUSSING HIS OWN BREAK WITH COMMUNIST PARTY SAYS PARTY FEARS NEW IDEAS  
AND THAT COMMUNIST POSITION ON AMERICAN NEGRO HAS UNDERGONE A "DISTINGUISHED  
AND LAMENTABLE REGRESSION" IN RECENT YEARS. WRIGHT WAS FURTHER CRE-  
DITED WITH DESCRIBING COMMUNISTS AS "NARROW MINDED, BIGOTED, INTOLERANT  
AND FRIGHTENED OF NEW IDEAS WHICH DONT FIT INTO THEIR OWN." THE HERALD  
TRIBUNE FURTHER STATES THAT MR WRIGHTS REMARKS WERE PROMPTED BY QUESTIONS  
GROWING OUT OF AN ARTICLE WHICH HE HAS WRITTEN FOR THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY  
FOR AUGUST UNDER THE TITLE OF "I TRIED TO BE A COMMUNIST." THE TRIBUNE  
FURTHER STATES THAT IN THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY ARTICLE THE AUTHOR OF NATIVE  
SON DISCUSSES HIS EARLIEST EXPERIENCES AS A CP MEMBER IN CHICAGO TOUCH-  
ING ON THE PROBLEMS HE FACED IN TRYING TO PRESENT HIS OWN IDEAS TO THE  
PARTY. FURTHERMORE THE AUGUST ATLANTIC MONTHLY DESCRIBES THE ARTICLE  
AS THE FIRST OF TWO INSTALLMENTS AND MR WRIGHT ADVISED THE TRIBUNE RE-  
PRESENTATIVE YESTERDAY THAT HE WOULD NOT DISCUSS THE SPECIFIC DETAILS

END PAGE ONE COPIES DESTROYED

153 AUG 10 1960

EX-2  
15 74 64-11  
23 AUG 8 1944  
c. e. - 2



NY2 PAGE 2

OF THE CHICAGO BREAK WITH THE COMMUNISTS BECAUSE THESE WILL BE COVERED  
IN THE SECOND MAGAZINE ARTICLE. WRIGHT FURTHER ADVISED THE TRIBUNE  
THAT HIS CP MEMBERSHIP COVERED THE PERIOD, ROUGHLY, FROM THE LATTER  
PART OF NINETEEN THIRTYTWO TO NINETEEN FORTY AND THAT HIS EARLY ASSO-  
CIATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS IN CHICAGO HAS BEEN BROKEN IN NINETEEN  
THIRTYSEVEN WHEN HE WAS EJECTED FROM THE SAME. WRIGHT FURTHER ADVISED  
THAT HE WAS ON THE OUTS WITH THE PARTY FROM MAY UNTIL AUGUST THIRTY  
SEVEN AND THAT HE WAS REINSTATED IN NY IN SUCH YEAR AND "MAINTAINED  
A RELATIONSHIP" WITH THE PARTY UNTIL FORTY WHEN HE SAID HE LEFT THE  
SAME. THE TRIBUNE ARTICLE DISCUSSING WRIGHTS COMMENTS ABOUT THE LAMEN-  
TABLE REGRESSION OF THE CP POSITION ON THE AMERICAN NEGRO CREDITED MR.  
WRIGHT WITH STATING "PUBLICLY COMMUNISTS WILL DENY THAT THERE IS ANY  
SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN THEIR MILITANCY, BUT PRIVATELY THEY OFFER ANY  
HANDY EXCUSE. THE MILITANCY OF THE NEGRO QUESTION HAS PASSED INTO THE  
HANDS OF RIGHT WING NEGROES. THAT WAS NOT TRUE EIGHT YEARS AGO. MOST  
OF THE BATTLES THEN WERE LED BY COMMUNISTS." THE ARTICLE FURTHER STA-  
TED THAT IN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION AS TO WHAT CAUSED THE CHICAGO RIFT  
BETWEEN HIM AND THE COMMUNISTS WRIGHT HAD STATED "IT WAS AN ACCUMULATIO  
OF MANY THINGS - NOT SO MUCH A LEAVING AS AN EJECTION OF A DIFFERENCE  
OF OPINION. I HAD MY WAY OF EXPRESSING MY CONCEPTION OF NEGRO EXPER-  
END PAGE TWO

NY2 PAGE THREE

IENCE IN WRITING. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE OF VALUE TO THEM. THEY HAD THEIR IDEAS OF HOW I SHOULD REACT AS A COMMUNIST. THERE WAS AN IRRECONCILABLE GAP BETWEEN OUR ATTITUDES. I DO NOT REGARD THE COMMUNISTS TODAY AS EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE." WRIGHT FURTHER ADVISED THE TRIBUNE THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE A TERRIBLE LOT TO LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE. COMMUNISTS PECULIARLY ARE TOO MUCH THE VICTIMS OF THE VERY SOCIETY THEY ARE TRYING TO CHANGE. THIS TOO OFTEN FINDS EXPRESSI IN INTOLERANCE AND NARROWNESS." AT THE PRESENT TIME THE NY OFFICE HAS UNDER CONSIDERATION THE ADVISABILITY OF INTERVIEWING MR WRIGHT.

CONROY

HOLD

100-365447

LVO

100-157464 - 11

SAC - New York City

August 4, 1944

John Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

Reference is made to your teletype of July 28, 1944, concerning the reported disaffiliation on the part of the subject with the Communist Political Association. It is noted in your teletype that you have under consideration the advisability of interviewing Wright.

In connection with any interview you might undertake with Wright, it is suggested that you consider obtaining from him specific information concerning exploitation of the Negro race by the Communist Political Association. Furthermore, if the interview actually takes place a previous study should be made of Wright's articles and particularly pertinent comments he makes with regard to the Communist Political Association.

Any interview with Wright must, of course, be most discreet, particularly in light of his reported comments in which he laments the "regression" of the Communist Political Association's position with respect to the American Negro. From a review of the teletype you submitted in this regard, it would seem that Wright does not think the Communist Political Association revolutionary enough at the present time with respect to the advancement of the Negro. This should be considered seriously prior to any action on your part.

"ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8/ery/ka

LVO

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
MAILED 11:00
AUG - 4 1944
F. M.
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
E. A. Tamm \_\_\_\_\_  
Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
Glavin \_\_\_\_\_  
Ladd \_\_\_\_\_  
Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Tracy \_\_\_\_\_  
Acers \_\_\_\_\_  
Coffey \_\_\_\_\_  
Harbo \_\_\_\_\_  
Hendon \_\_\_\_\_  
Quinn Tamm \_\_\_\_\_  
Nease \_\_\_\_\_  
Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

78 SEP 16 1944

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RECEIVED NEW YORK

*Est*

32

To Tell the Truth

# Mr. Wright Didn't Discover It

By Robert Minor

*did*  
**I**N the half-dozen years that Richard Wright was a member of the Communist Party he did not discover that the Communists have no concern whatever with persuading people to be loyal to the Communist organization per se. He sat in meetings for years, and did not discover that the only thing required is that you be loyal to the people's cause. If you are that, then loyalty to the Communist organization will take care of itself.



Wright has a piece in the Atlantic Monthly, in which, whether inadvertently or not, he takes a position on far bigger questions than whether a person likes Communists.

Within the past few years, and faster in recent months, the Negro people have shaped in final form their answers to the national question for the Negro of the United States: That this is their country as well as anyone else's, and that they will have their equal place in it and will fight knock-down-and-drag-out for that equal place, and will win, and those who oppose it will go the way of Martin and Joe and Cotton Ed and Viereck and Dilling and Goebbels.

**R**ICHARD WRIGHT forgot that this fight is on, and with his head stuck into his typewriter he wrote:

"Could a Negro ever live half-way like a human being in this goddamn country?"

That was all the editor needed to have Richard Wright's signature in, in the main; but Wright kept on and said what logically goes with it—because the big, all absorbing, worldwide fight in this war keeps pushing us along. He wrote:

"Then . . . a Jewish chap . . . He introduced me to a Jewish boy (again) to a Jewish boy . . . Jewish chap . . . a short, friendly, black-haired, well-read fellow with hanging lips and bulging eyes . . . (and) a Negro Communist . . ."

like: "Der Jude mit haengender Unterlippe und Glotz Augen."

Throughout our country, as we all know, there are desperate efforts to accentuate the "racial" divisions to every possible complexity. "Negro against Jew," is the Gerald Smith way of getting Negro support for an anti-Negro movement; since anti-Semitism is only a form of white chauvinism. And Negro against trade unions, purely as an aid to the old villainy of trade-union exclusiveness against the Negro. The first demand on a man who is to remain in the Communist movement is that he be a democrat—in the broad, nonparty sense of the word—a republican in the great long-time historical meaning. And even Richard Wright's remarkably talented book, Native Son, had as its weakest side, as Ben Davis pointed out at the time, a certain lack of sense of the vast democratic character of the Negro's struggle of the ages. Now the greatest "national" struggle of all time is raging to its fiery climax in which the victory lies with all peoples seeking freedom. And Mr. Wright forgot that certain editorial people are glad to get anything in election time that seems to line up talented people on the untalented side of the enormous struggle.

The extermination of the Jim Crow system is going to be realized because this is not a "god-damn country." History has advanced; the day has dawned when the mass of Negro workers is entering the trade unions, and the trade unions are beginning to fight for their rights; voters of the biggest city of the world, composed of an alliance of demo-

cratic-willed white and Negro people, elect a Negro to represent them in the City Council on a platform that includes abolition of the Jim Crow system, and will elect to the United States Congress another great Negro leader—all a very modest beginning, only a bridgehead for a fight; but the people have decided. Mr. Richard Wright lends his name to the other opinion.

**C**AN we do without Richard Wright? Yes, a great movement of the people can do without any individual. The movement goes on, and rises, even when the individual we once loved pulls himself down. Didn't many get discouraged and quit before the great Scottsboro campaign in the 1930's; and didn't thousands of others then come with vision in their eyes for every individual who, with faded eyes, pulled himself down?

One who came in 1932 to the height of the surging movement of the people stirred by the Scottsboro struggle, was a fine young man, living in that Hoover day as a part-time street-sweeper in Chicago, one of those many sons of the people in whom the spark of genius needs but to be fanned by millions of brothers in a common cause, Richard Wright.

Is he gone, now? Others will come; more than you can count; and firmer; more able to reject those who say we will not succeed in living all as human beings "in this goddamn country," and—who translates into our political speech: "Der Jude mit haengender Unterlippe. . ."

Wright says, "I lay in bed thinking, I've got to go it alone. . ."

You are not alone, Mr. Wright. You are in bad company.

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DATE 8-25-81 BY 868/SP/MLK

This is a clipping from  
page 6 of the

DAILY WORKER

Date 8-15-44  
Clipped at the Seat of  
Government.

100-157461-A  
NOT RECORDED  
14-87 AUG 16 1944

EX-50  
62 AUG 25 1944

b7c

New York 7, New York

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

KED  
100-4931

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
August 8, 1944.

Director, FBI

Re: COMMUNIST POLITICAL ASSOCIATION  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

Dear Sir:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

b1  
b2  
b7c  
b7D

Very truly yours,

E. E. CONROY  
SAC

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OTHERWISE

Encls. (4)

cc. NY File #100-41674

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) OF class  
DATE 10-21-81 ans

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

12

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CLASS. & EXT. BY SP8 BTJ/ane  
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2  
DATE OF REVIEW 8-25-92  
8-25-81

100-1-1-12  
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# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

NY FILE NO. 100-41674

REPORT MADE AT <b>NEW YORK, NEW YORK</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>9/5/44</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>7/28, 8/21, 31, 9/2/44</b>	REPORT MADE BY <b>[REDACTED]</b>
TITLE <b>RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>INTERNAL SECURITY-C</b>

**b7c**

## KEY FIGURE

### SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

Subject continues to reside at 89 Jefferts Place, Apt. C23, Brooklyn, 16, N.Y. [REDACTED]

Subject author of two articles appearing in ATLANTIC MONTHLY for August and September, 1944, entitled, "I Tried To Be A Communist". Theme of articles seems to conclude with thought that subject broke with party because his friends in the Party, including those of his own race, were unable to recognize him as their friend. Articles do not appear to attack Communist Party as as revolutionary club, but because of failure of individuals in Party who properly recognize and deal with problems in society. Articles received wide-spread newspaper publication. Reports of informants and publicity indicates prominent Party members concerned over WRIGHT's articles. WRIGHT has authored new book "Black Boy", an autobiography which is not expected to appear until next year. ATLANTIC MONTHLY articles were originally final portion of this book.

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AGENCY  
REC'D  
RE: NEW YORK

### REFERENCES:

Bureau File 100-157464.  
Report of Special Agent [REDACTED]  
at New York, New York.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE  
dated 7/8/44

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### DETAILS:

Subject has been considered a Key Figure in Communist activities in the New York Field Division.

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APPROVED AND FORWARDED <i>E. C. Conroy</i> SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES
COPIES OF THIS REPORT 5-Bureau 1-Col. S.V. Constant-D. of I., 2SC 3-New York	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <p>100-157464-13</p> <p>SEP 8 1944</p> </div> <div> <p>RECORDED</p> <p>INDEXED</p> </div> </div>
	<p>CLASS. &amp; EXT. BY [REDACTED]</p> <p>REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4</p> <p>DATE OF REVIEW [REDACTED]</p>

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FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

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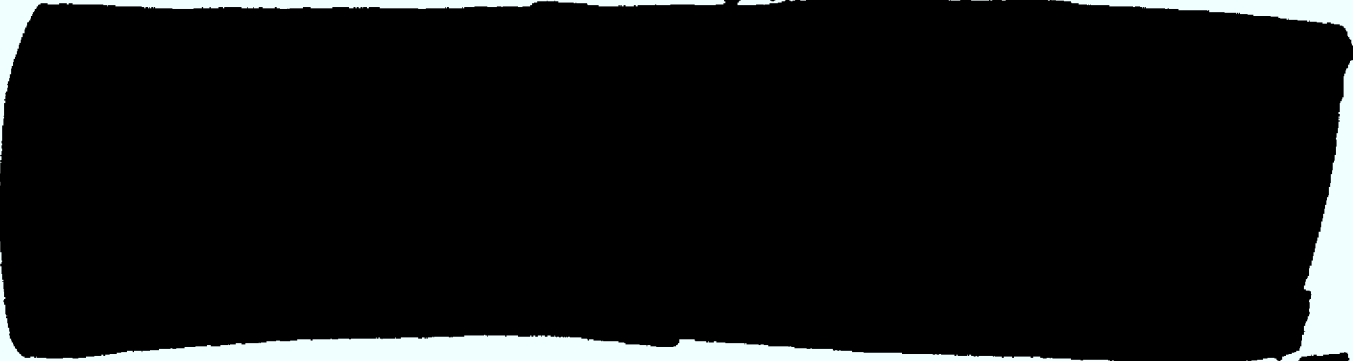
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ARTICLES IN ATLANTIC MONTHLY:

Subject, RICHARD WRIGHT's articles appearing in the August and September, 1944 issues of the "ATLANTIC MONTHLY" magazine were emphatically brought to the public's attention by considerable publicity in the New York newspapers.

On July 28, 1944 the New York Herald Tribune gave a lengthy article entitled, "NEGRO AUTHOR CRITICIZES REDS AS INTOLERANT". This article states that WRIGHT in discussing his break with the Communists said that the Party fears new ideas, and that the Communists position regarding the American Negro has undergone a "distinct and lamentable regression," in recent years. He described the Communists as "narrow-minded, bigoted, intolerant and frightened of new ideas which don't fit into their own." The Herald Tribune's article referred to WRIGHT's article in the ATLANTIC MONTHLY.

In an interview, Mr. WRIGHT is reported to have stated that his Communist Party membership roughly covered the period from the latter part of 1932 or early 1933 to 1940, and his early association with the Communists in Chicago was broken in 1937 when he said he was "ejected" from the Party. WRIGHT stated that he was reinstated in New York in 1937 and maintained a relationship with the Party until 1940 when he left the Party. (The paper quoted WRIGHT as saying, "Publicly, Communists will deny that there is any substantial change in their militancy but privately they offer any handy excuse. The militancy on the Negro question has passed into the hands of right-wing Negroes. That was not true eight years ago. Most of the battles then were led by Communists." He said further that he did not regard the Communists of today as effective instruments for social change, and described them as being too much the victims of the very society they are trying to change, resulting

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often in intolerance and narrowness.

A similar article appeared in the New York Journal-American for July 28, 1944 entitled "REDS ALL WRONG, WRIGHT QUILTS 'EM". This article states that until recently WRIGHT was one of the high priests of the Communist Party staunchly defending Red ideology as the only possible political philosophy for his race, but today he is hurling epithets at his former Communist comrades. This article also referred to the story appearing in the ATLANTIC MONTHLY and quoted the same statements which appeared in the other newspapers.

The Washington Field Office also forwarded a letter to the New York office bringing to its attention an item from the column, "The World Today" by GEORGE S. SCHUYLER appearing in the August 5, 1944 issue of the Pittsburgh Courier. This item called attention to WRIGHT's articles in the Atlantic Monthly and commented briefly upon it.

It is also interesting to note that considerable publicity was given WRIGHT's articles in the Daily Worker newspaper. In the Daily Worker for August 6, 1944 the column by BENJAMIN J. DAVIS, JR. entitled, "New Times" contains what it terms "a few words on RICHARD WRIGHT and New Ideas". DAVIS considers first the promises of WRIGHT as an author, which was indicated by his book, "Native Son". He then refers to what he calls the public and wholly unjustifiable attack on the Communists, who were the very organization whose outlooks had helped WRIGHT create his masterpiece. DAVIS stated that according to WRIGHT's statements, he withdrew from the Communists in 1940. DAVIS asked why he waited until now to make this break public and questions whom WRIGHT is trying to impress. DAVIS refers to WRIGHT's attitude as a form of superleftism which puts him in a class with NORMAN THOMAS and other "Red-Baters". DAVIS comments that this attack by WRIGHT comes at a crucial election time when the future state of the negroes requires the re-election of Roosevelt.

It is also noted that in the Daily Worker of August 15, 1944 an article by ROBERT MINOR is entitled, "Mr. WRIGHT DIDN'T DISCOVER IT". MINOR begins his article with the comment that in the half dozen years that RICHARD WRIGHT was a member of the Communist Party he did not discover that the Communists have no concern whatsoever with persuading people to be loyal to the Communist organization per se; that WRIGHT did not discover that the only thing required is that you be loyal to the peoples cause and that if you are that then loyalty to the Communist organization will take care of itself.

MINOR says that in WRIGHT's article in the ATLANTIC MONTHLY he takes a position on far bigger questions than whether a person likes Communists. He says that RICHARD WRIGHT forgot the fight of the Negro people and has taken

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UNDEVELOPED LEAD

NEW YORK FIELD DIVISION

AT BROOKLYN, NEW YORK- Will, after careful consideration, discreetly interview subject WRIGHT concerning his association with the Communist Party.

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articles were originally the final portion of WRIGHT's new book, as yet unpublished, an autobiography entitled, "Black Boy".

CS [REDACTED] furnished this information concerning [REDACTED] b2 b7D

In view of the fact that the publicity and the information furnished by informants indicated WRIGHT's break with the Communist Party was an actual fact, it was felt that a discreet and careful interview with WRIGHT might be productive. However, it was ascertained on August 31, 1944 that WRIGHT is presently on his vacation and will not be back in New York City until about September 15, 1944.

P E N D I N G

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would exact of himself that made him tell of his wrongdoings. The Communists had talked to him until they had given him new eyes with which to see his own crime. And they sat back and listened to him tell how he had erred. He was one with all the members there, regardless of race or color; his heart was theirs and their hearts were his; and when a man reaches that state of kinship with others, that degree of oneness, or when a trial has made him kin after he has been sundered from them by wrongdoing, then he must rise and say, out of a sense of the deepest morality in the world: 'I'm guilty. Forgive me.'

WRIGHT continues with the comment, "This, to me, was a spectacle of glory; and yet, because it had condemned me, because it was blind and ignorant, I felt that it was a spectacle of horror. The blindness of their limited lives—lives truncated and impoverished by the oppression they had suffered long before they had ever heard of Communism—made them think that I was with their enemies. American life had so corrupted their consciousness that they were unable to recognize their friends when they saw them. I knew that if they had held state power I should have been declared guilty of treason and my execution would have followed. And I knew that they felt, with all the strength of their black blindness, that they were right."

The foregoing portion of WRIGHT's article has been quoted because of the fact that it is believed significant in indicating that WRIGHT disapproves whole heartedly of the American way of life and living even though he has publicly at this time announced a breach with the Communist Party organization.

The concluding portion of his article tells of his transfer from the Federal Experiment Theater to the Federal Writers Project and leads up to the event of May Day 1936 when WRIGHT was refused the right to march in the parade and was physically rejected from the line of march by white Communists while other Communists, white and black, looked on without coming to his assistance. WRIGHT again refers to the blindness of these individuals and made the statement "I remembered the stories I had written, the stories in which I had assigned a role of honor and glory to the Communist Party, and I was glad that they were down in black and white, were finished. For I knew in my heart that I should never be able to write that way again, should never be able to feel with that simple sharpness about life, should never again express such passionate hope, should never again make so total a commitment of faith."

He then tells of his resolution to write and to do what he could by his writing to fight and to create a sense of the hunger for life that gnaws in us all, to keep alive in our hearts a sense of the inexpressibly human.\*

In regard to the articles by WRIGHT it may be noted that these two

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WRIGHT attended the National John Reed congress in the summer of 1934 and was stunned at the decision announced by a nationally known Communist to dissolve the clubs. WRIGHT said that he asked "Why", and was told that the dissolution was because the clubs did not serve the new peoples front policy.

The concluding portion of this first article deals with WRIGHTS attempts at the Congress of American Writers held in New York City in 1935.

The second article in the September 1944 issue of the Atlantic Monthly commences with WRIGHT's work after the dissolution of the John Reed Clubs. He said that at this time he avoided unit meetings for fear of being subjected to discipline. He tells them in an assignment by the Party directing him to organize a committee against the high cost of living, and he subsequently entered into this work. Later on he was asked to go to Switzerland as a Youth Delegate and then to the Soviet Union, but he refused because it would have interfered with his writing.

He relates the story of a unit meeting at which he requested that his membership be dropped from the Party rolls, although he desired to retain his membership in those organizations in which the Party has influence, and hoped that sometime in the future he could meet and talk with Party leaders as to what tasks he could best perform. Wright tells of unjustified attacks by other members on which he was labeled "a Trotskyite" and accused of other ideas contrary to those of the Communist Party. A considerable portion of this final article is devoted to the trial within the Communist Party of WRIGHT's friend ROSS concerning whom he had once accumulated material for with the purpose of using it in his writings. He dwells at considerable length on the development of the charges in this trial, the manner of its conduction and the presentation of charges including the attitude of the members present. He pictures the trial as being as such a nature so talkatively presented and so sincerely made and with the ultimate charges being made by the accused's best friends, so that it resulted in the confession of the accused that he was guilty of the charges. In regard to ROSS at the conclusion of the trial, WRIGHT states "his voice broke in a sob, no one prodded him. No one tortured him. No one threatened him. He was free to go out of the hall and never see another Communist, but he did not want to. He could not. The vision of the communal world had sunk down into his soul and it would never leave him until life left him. He talked on, outlining how he had erred, how he would reform." WRIGHT continues, "I knew, as I sat there, that there were many people who thought they knew life who had been skeptical of the Moscow trials. But they could not have been skeptical had they witnessed this astonishing trial. Ross had not been doped; he had been awakened. It was not a fear of the Communist Party that had made him confess but a fear of the punishment that he

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REVIEW OF ATLANTIC MONTHLY ARTICLES:

"I TRIED TO BE A COMMUNIST" by RICHARD WRIGHT.

The first article appeared in the August 1944 issue of the Atlantic Monthly magazine and commenced with an invitation which WRIGHT received from a group of white boys he had known while working in the Post Office in Chicago. He lost he was amazed to learn that many of these boys had joined the Communist Party and he describes his entries into the work in the John Reed Club. In regard to the Communist literature which he first read he stated that "it was not the economics of Communism, nor the great power of trade Unions, nor the excitement of underground politics that claimed me; my attention was caught by the similarity of the experiences of workers in other lands, by the possibility of uniting scattered but kindred peoples into a whole. It seemed to me that here at last, in the realm of revolutionary expression, Negro experience could find a home, a functioning value and role."

WRIGHT became a leader in the John Reed Club and contributed to such publications as "Left Front", "Arvil", and "New Masses". In his presentation WRIGHT points out that his first misunderstanding with other Negro Communists grew out of the fact that because of his publications and writing they classified him as an intellectual.

He also had difficulty with the Party in Chicago because of his efforts to learn of the life of one ROSS, a Negro Communist. WRIGHT says that ROSS typified the effective street agitator, and was a Southern born Negro who had migrated to the North, and whose life reflected the crude hopes and frustrations of the peasant in the city. WRIGHT felt that if he could get ROSS' story he could make known some of the difficulties inherent in the adjustment of a folk people to an urban environment. Word spread of this activity of WRIGHT in the Communist Party, and he was warned to stop such activities.

These articles by WRIGHT are auto-biographical in nature, and WRIGHT points out at this time that he gave up the idea of biographical sketches on individuals he met, and settled upon writing short stories using the material he had gotten from ROSS and his friends. One such story was published in an anthology under the title of "Big Boy Leaves Home."

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up the cause of those who are endeavoring to accentuate racial divisions. He points out that in his article WRIGHT in several instances refers to individuals as "a Jewish chap", "a Jewish boy", and "his Jewish wife".

In answer to the question purposely put by Mr. MINOR, "Can We Do Without RICHARD WRIGHT?", MINOR says "Yes", that any great movement of the people can do without any individual.

It appears from the fact that articles were written concerning Mr. WRIGHT's, "I Tried To Be a Communist", by both BENJAMIN J. DAVIS, JR. and ROBERT MINOR that the Communist organization has laid considerable importance upon this statement by WRIGHT. The matter even reached the Broadway Columns and appeared in the column of DANTON WALKER in the New York Daily News of August 28, 1944 wherein it is stated that "RICHARD WRIGHT, author of "Native Son", has started an uproar with his two-part serial in the Atlantic Monthly called "I Tried to Be a Communist."

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[REDACTED] c  
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CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANTS

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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A confidential symbol was used for [REDACTED] to protect the identity of the informant because of [REDACTED] and also because of the information he furnished.

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## Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

LVO 100-135-

TO : MR. STRICKLAND *W*

FROM : MR. E. H. WINTERROWD

SUBJECT: COMMUNIST EXPLOITATION OF NEGROES  
(Richard Wright)  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

DATE: October 12, 1944

Mr. Tolson \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. E. A. Tamm \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Clegg \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Coffey \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Glavin \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Ladd \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Nichols \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Rosen \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Tracy \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Mohr \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Carson \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Hendon \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Mumford \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Jones \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Quinn Tamm \_\_\_\_\_

Tele. Room \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Nease \_\_\_\_\_

Miss Beahm \_\_\_\_\_

Miss Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

There are attached for record purposes two photostatic copies of Wright's second installment of "I Tried To Be A Communist" appearing in the September, 1944 issue of the Atlantic Monthly, beginning on page 48.

Attachment

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/bse

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INDEXED

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# I TRIED TO BE A COMMUNIST

by RICHARD WRIGHT

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WITH the John Reed clubs now dissolved, I was free of all party relations. I avoided unit meetings for fear of being subjected to discipline. Occasionally a Negro Communist — defying the code that enjoined him to shun suspect elements — came to my home and informed me of the current charges that Communists were bringing against one another. To my astonishment I heard that Buddy Neelson had branded me a “smuggler of reaction.”

Buddy Neelson was the Negro who had formulated the Communist position for the American Negro; he had made speeches in the Kremlin; he had spoken before Stalin himself.

“Why does Neelson call me that?” I asked.

“He says that you are a petty bourgeois degenerate,” I was told.

“What does that mean?”

“He says that you are corrupting the party with your ideas.”

“How?”

There was no answer. I decided that my relationship with the party was about over; I should have to leave it. The attacks were growing worse, and my refusal to react incited Neelson into coining more absurd phrases. I was termed a “bastard intellectual,” an “incipient Trotskyite”; it was claimed that I possessed an “anti-leadership attitude” and that I was manifesting “scraphim tendencies” — a phrase meaning that one has withdrawn from the struggle of life and considers oneself infallible.

Working all day and writing half the night brought me down with a severe chest ailment. While I was ill, a knock came at my door one morning. My

another admitted Ed Green, the man who had demanded to know what use I planned to make of the material I was collecting from the comrades. I stared at him as I lay abed and I knew that he considered me a clever and sworn enemy of the party. Bitterness welled up in me.

“What do you want?” I asked bluntly. “You see I’m ill.”

“I have a message from the party for you,” he said.

I had not said good day, and he had not offered to say it. He had not smiled, and neither had I. He looked curiously at my bleak room.

“This is the home of a bastard intellectual,” I cut at him.

He stared without blinking. I could not endure this standing there so stone-like. Common decency made me say, “Sit down.”

His shoulders stiffened.

“I’m in a hurry.” He spoke like an army officer.

“What do you want to tell me?”

“Do you know Buddy Neelson?” he asked.

I was suspicious. “Was this a political trap?”

“What about Buddy Neelson?” I asked, committing myself to nothing until I knew the kind of reality I was grappling with.

“He wants to see you,” Ed Green said.

“What about?” I asked, still suspicious.

“He wants to talk with you about your party work,” he said.

“I’m ill and can’t see him until I’m well,” I said.

Ed Green stood for a fraction of a second, then turned on his heel and marched out of the room.

When my chest healed, I sought an appointment with Buddy Neelson. He was a short, black man with an ever ready smile, thick lips, a furtive manner, and a greasy, sweaty look. His bearing was nervous, self-conscious; he seemed always to be hiding some deep irritation. He spoke in short, jerky sentences, hopping nimbly from thought to thought, as though his mind worked in a free, associational

RICHARD WRIGHT is an American Negro whose schooling carried him through the grammar grades, and who has been educating himself ever since. His novel, *Native Son*, which was widely discussed in the year of its publication (1940), and his forthcoming autobiography, which will appear later this year, proclaim him as one of the most forthright and eloquent authors of his race.

This is the second of two installments.

man. He suffered from asthma and would snort at unexpected intervals. Now and then he would punctuate his flow of words by taking a nip from a bottle of whiskey. He had traveled half around the world and his talk was pitted with vague allusions to European cities. I met him in his apartment, listened to him intently, observed him minutely, for I knew that I was facing one of the leaders of World Communism.

"Hello, Wright," he snorted. "I've heard about you."

As we shook hands he burst into a loud, seemingly senseless laugh; and as he guffawed I could not tell whether his mirth was directed at me or was meant to hide his uneasiness.

"I hope what you've heard about me is good," he parried.

"Sit down," he laughed again, waving me to a chair. "Yes, they tell me you write."

"I try to," I said.

"You can write," he snorted. "I read that article you wrote for the *New Masses* about Joe Louis. Good stuff. First political treatment of sports we've ever had. Ha-ha."

I waited. I had thought that I should encounter a man of ideas, but he was not that. Then perhaps he was a man of action? But that was not indicated either.

"They tell me that you are a friend of Ross," he shot at me.

I paused before answering. He had not asked me directly, but had hinted in a neutral, teasing way. Ross, I had been told, was slated for expulsion from the party on the ground that he was "anti-leadership"; and if a member of the Communist International was asking me if I was a friend of a man about to be expelled, he was indirectly asking me if I was loyal or not.

"Ross is not particularly a friend of mine," I said frankly. "But I know him well; in fact, quite well."

"If he isn't your friend, how do you happen to know him so well?" he asked, laughing to soften the hard threat of his question.

"I was writing an account of his life and I know him as well, perhaps, as anybody," I told him.

"I heard about that," he said. "Wright. Ha-ha. Say, let me call you Dick, huh?"

"Go ahead," I said.

"Dick," he said, "Ross is a nationalist." He seemed to let the weight of his accusation sink in. He meant that Ross's militancy was extreme. "We Communists don't dramatize Negro nationalism," he said in a voice that laughed, accused, and guffawed.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"We're not advertising Ross." He spoke directly now.

"We're talking about two different things," I said. "You seem worried about my making Ross popular because he is your political opponent. But I'm not concerned about Ross's politics at all. The man struck me as one who typified certain traits of the Negro migrant. I've already sold a story based upon an incident in his life."

Neelson became excited.

"What was the incident?" he asked.

"Some trouble he got into when he was thirteen years old," I said.

"Oh, I thought it was political," he said, shrugging.

"But I'm telling you that you are wrong about that," I explained. "I'm not trying to fight you with my writing. I've no political ambitions. You must believe that. I'm trying to depict Negro life."

"Have you finished writing about Ross?"

"No," I said. "I dropped the idea. Our party members were suspicious of me and were afraid to talk." He laughed.

"Dick," he began, "we're short of forces. We're facing a grave crisis."

"The party's always facing a crisis," I said.

His smile left and he stared at me.

"You're not cynical, are you, Dick?" he asked.

"No," I said. "But it's the truth. Each week, each month there's a crisis."

"You're a funny guy," he said, laughing, snorting again. "But we've got a job to do. We're altering our work. Fascism's the danger, the danger now to all people."

"I understand," I said.

"We've got to defeat the Fascists," he said, snorting from asthma. "We've discussed you and know your abilities. We want you to work with us. We've got to crash out of our narrow way of working and get our message to the church people, students, club people, professionals, middle class."

"I've been called names," I said softly. "Is that crashing out of the narrow way?"

"Forget that," he said.

He had not denied the name-calling. That meant that, if I did not obey him, the name-calling would begin again.

"I don't know if I fit into things," I said openly.

"We want to trust you with an important assignment," he said.

"What do you want me to do?"

"We want you to organize a committee against the high cost of living."

"The high cost of living?" I exclaimed. "What do I know about such things?"



"Wright, how would you like to go to Switzerland?" Smith asked with dramatic suddenness.

"I'd like it," I said. "But I'm tied up with work now."

"You can drop that," Nealson said. "This is important."

"What would I do in Switzerland?" I asked.

"You'll go as a youth delegate," Smith said.

"From there you can go to the Soviet Union."

"Much as I'd like to, I'm afraid I can't make it," I said honestly. "I simply cannot drop the writing I'm doing now."

We sat looking at one another, smoking silently.

"Has Nealson told you how I feel?" I asked Smith.

Smith did not answer. He stared at me a long time, then spat: "Wright, you're a fool!"

I rose. Smith turned away from me. A breath more of anger and I should have driven my fist into his face. Nealson laughed sheepishly, smorting.

"Was that necessary?" I asked, trembling.

I stood recalling how, in my boyhood, I would have fought until blood ran had anyone said anything like that to me. But I was a man now and master of my rage, able to control the surging emotions. I put on my hat and walked to the door. "Keep cool," I said to myself. "Don't let this get out of hand."

"This is good-bye," I said.

I attended the next unit meeting and asked for a place on the agenda, which was readily granted. Nealson was there. Evans was there. Ed Green was there. When my time came to speak, I said:—

"Comrades, for the past two years I've worked daily with most of you. Despite this, I have for some time found myself in a difficult position in the party. What has caused this difficulty is a long story which I do not care to recite now; it would serve no purpose. But I tell you honestly that I think I've found a solution of my difficulty. I am proposing here tonight that my membership be dropped from the party rolls. No ideological differences impel me to say this. I simply do not wish to be bound any longer by the party's decisions. I should like to retain my membership in those organizations in which the party has influence, and I shall comply with the party's program in those organizations. I hope that my word will be accepted in the spirit in which they are said. Perhaps sometime in the future I can meet and talk with the leaders of the party as to what tasks I can best perform."

I sat down amid a profound silence. The Negro secretary of the meeting looked frightened, glancing at Nealson, Evans, and Ed Green.

"Is there any discussion on Comrade Wright's statement?" the secretary asked finally.

"I move that discussion on Wright's statement be deferred," Nealson said.

A quick vote confirmed Nealson's motion. I looked about the silent room, then reached for my hat and rose.

"I should like to go now," I said.

No one said anything. I walked to the door and out into the night and a heavy burden seemed to lift from my shoulders. I was free. And I had done it in a decent and forthright manner. I had not been bitter. I had not raked up a single recrimination. I had attacked no one. I had disavowed nothing.

The next night two Negro Communists called at my home. They pretended to be ignorant of what had happened at the unit meeting. Patiently I explained what had occurred.

"Your story does not agree with what Nealson says," they said, revealing the motive of their visit.

"And what does Nealson say?" I asked.

"He says that you are in league with a Trotskyite group, and that you made an appeal for other party members to follow you in leaving the party."

"What?" I gasped. "That's not true. I asked that my membership be dropped. I raised no political issues." What did this mean? I sat pondering. "Look, maybe I ought to make my break with the party clean. If Nealson's going to act this way, I'll resign."

"You can't resign," they told me.

"What do you mean?" I demanded.

"No one can resign from the Communist Party."

I looked at them and laughed.

"You're talking crazy," I said.

"Nealson would expel you publicly, cut the ground from under your feet if you resigned," they said. "People would think that something was wrong if someone like you quit here on the South Side."

I was angry. Was the party so weak and uncertain of itself that it could not accept what I had said at the unit meeting? Who thought up such tactics? Then, suddenly, I understood. These were the secret, underground tactics of the political movement of the Communists under the tears of Old Russia! The Communist Party felt that it had to assassinate me morally merely because I did not want to be bound by its decisions. I saw now that my comrades were acting out a fantasy that had no relation whatever to the reality of their environment.

"Tell Nealson that if he fights me, then, by God, I'll fight him," I said. "If he leaves this damn thing where it is, then all right. If he thinks I won't fight him publicly, he's crazy!"

"It's easy. You can learn," he said.

I was in the midst of writing a novel and he was pulling me from it to tabulate the price of groceries. "He doesn't think much of what I'm trying to do," I thought.

"Comrade Neelson," I said, "a writer who hasn't written anything worth while is a most doubtful person. Now, I'm in that category. Yet I think I can write. I don't want to ask for special favors, but I'm in the midst of a book which I hope to complete in six months or so. Let me convince myself that I'm wrong about my hankering to write and then I'll be with you all the way."

"Dick," he said, turning in his chair and waving his hand as though to brush away an insect that was annoying him, "you've got to get to the masses of people."

"You've seen some of my work," I said. "Isn't it just barely good enough to warrant my being given a chance?"

"The party can't deal with your feelings," he said.

"Maybe I don't belong in the party," I stated it full.

"Oh, no! Don't say that," he said, snorting. He looked at me. "You're blunt."

"I put things the way I feel them," I said. "I want to start in right with you. I've had too damn much crazy trouble in the party."

He laughed and lit a cigarette.

"Dick," he said, shaking his head, "the trouble with you is that you've been around with those white artists on the North Side too much. You even talk like 'em. You've got to know your own people."

"I think I know them," I said, realizing that I could never really talk with him. "I've been inside of three fourths of the Negroes' homes on the South Side."

"But you've got to work with 'em," he said.

"I was working with Ross until I was suspected of being a spy," I said.

"Dick," he spoke seriously now, "the party has decided that you are to accept this task."

I was silent. I knew the meaning of what he had said. A decision was the highest injunction that a Communist could receive from his party, and to break a decision was to break the effectiveness of the party's ability to act. In principle I heartily agreed with this, for I knew that it was impossible for working people to forge instruments of political power until they had achieved unity of action. Oppressed for centuries, divided, hopeless, corrupted, misled, they were cynical—as I had once been—and the Communist method of unity

had been found historically to be the only means of achieving discipline. In short, Neelson had asked me directly if I were a Communist or not. I wanted to be a Communist, but my kind of Communist. I wanted to shape people's feelings, awaken their hearts. But I could not tell Neelson that; he would only have snorted.

"I'll organize the committee and turn it over to someone else," I suggested.

"You don't want to do this, do you?" he asked.

"No," I said firmly.

"What would you like to do on the South Side, then?"

"I'd like to organize Negro artists," I said.

"But the party doesn't need that now," he said.

I rose, knowing that he had no intention of letting me go after I had organized the committee. I wanted to tell him that I was through, but I was not ready to bring matters to a head. I went out, angry with myself, angry with him, angry with the party. Well, I had not broken the decision, but neither had I accepted it wholly. I had dodged, trying to save time for writing, time to think.

## 10

MY TASK consisted in attending meetings until the late hours of the night, taking part in discussions, or lending myself generally along with other Communists in leading the people of the South Side. We debated the housing situation, the best means of forcing the city to authorize open hearings on conditions among Negroes. I gritted my teeth as the daily value of pork chops was tabulated, longing to be at home with my writing.

Neelson was cleverer than I and he confronted me before I had a chance to confront him. I was summoned one night to meet Neelson and a "friend." When I arrived at a South Side hotel I was introduced to a short, yellow man who carried himself like Napoleon. He wore glasses, kept his full lips pursed as though he were engaged in perpetual thought. He swaggered when he walked. He spoke slowly, precisely, trying to charge each of his words with more meaning than the words were able to carry. He talked of trivial things in lofty tones. He said that his name was Smith, that he was from Washington, that he planned to launch a national organization among Negroes to federalize all existing Negro institutions so as to achieve a broad unity of action. The three of us sat at a table, facing one another. I knew that another and last offer was about to be made to me, and if I did not accept it, there would be open warfare.

I was not able to know if my statement reached Nelson. There was no public outcry against me, but in the ranks of the party itself a storm broke loose and I was branded a traitor, an unstable personality, and one whose faith had failed.

My comrades had known me, my family, my friends; they, God knows, had known my aching poverty. But they had never been able to conquer their fear of the individual way in which I acted and lived, an individuality which life had scored into my bones.

# 11

I was transferred by the relief authorities from the South Side Boys' Club to the Federal Negro Theater to work as a publicity agent. There were days when I was acutely hungry for the incessant analyses that went on among the comrades, but whenever I heard news of the party's inner life, it was of charges and countercharges, reprisals and counterreprisals.

The Federal Negro Theater, for which I was doing publicity, had run a series of ordinary plays, all of which had been revamped to "Negro style," with jungle scenes, spirituals, and all. For example, the skinny white woman who directed it, an elderly missionary type, would take a play whose characters were white, whose theme dealt with the Middle Ages, and recast it in terms of Southern Negro life with overtones of African backgrounds. Contemporary plays dealing realistically with Negro life were spurned as being controversial. There were about forty Negro actors and actresses in the theater, lolling about, yearning, disgruntled.

What a waste of talent, I thought. Here was an opportunity for the production of a worth-while Negro drama and no one was aware of it. I studied the situation, then laid the matter before white friends of mine who held influential positions in the Works Progress Administration. I asked them to replace the white woman—including her quaint aesthetic notions—with someone who knew the Negro and the theater. They promised me that they would act.

Within a month the white woman director had been transferred. We moved from the South Side to the Loop and were housed in a first-rate theater. I successfully recommended Charles DeSheim, a talented Jew, as director. DeSheim and I held long talks during which I outlined what I thought could be accomplished. I urged that our first offering should be a bill of three one-act plays, including Paul Green's *Hymn to the Rising Sun*, a grim, poetical, powerful one-acter dealing with chain-gang conditions in the South.

I was happy. At last I was in a position to make suggestions and have them acted upon. I was convinced that we had a rare chance to build a genuine Negro theater. I convoked a meeting and introduced DeSheim to the Negro company, telling them that he was a man who knew the theater, who would lead them toward serious dramatics. DeSheim made a speech wherein he said that he was not at the theater to direct it, but to help the Negroes to direct it. He spoke so simply and eloquently that they rose and applauded him.

I then proudly passed out copies of Paul Green's *Hymn to the Rising Sun* to all members of the company. DeSheim assigned reading parts. I sat down to enjoy adult Negro dramatics. But something went wrong. The Negroes stammered and faltered in their lines. Finally they stopped reading altogether. DeSheim looked frightened. One of the Negro actors rose.

"Mr. DeSheim," he began, "we think this play is indecent. We don't want to act in a play like this before the American public. I don't think any such conditions exist in the South. I lived in the South and I never saw any chain gangs. Mr. DeSheim, we want a play that will make the public love us."

"What kind of play do you want?" DeSheim asked them.

They did not know. I went to the office and looked up their records and found that most of them had spent their lives playing cheap vaudeville. I had thought that they played vaudeville because the legitimate theater was barred to them, and now it turned out they wanted none of the legitimate theater, that they were scared spitless at the prospects of appearing in a play that the public might not like, even though they did not understand that public and had no way of determining its likes or dislikes.

I felt—but only temporarily—that perhaps the whites were right, that Negroes were children and would never grow up. DeSheim informed the company that he would produce any play they liked, and they sat like frightened mice, possessing no words to make known their vague desires.

When I arrived at the theater a few mornings later, I was horrified to find that the company had drawn up a petition demanding the ousting of DeSheim. I was asked to sign the petition and I refused.

"Don't you know your friends?" I asked them.

They glared at me. I called DeSheim to the theater and we went into a frantic conference.

"What must I do?" he asked.

"Take them into your confidence," I said. "Let them know that it is their right to petition for a redress of their grievances."



DeShain thought my advice sound and, accordingly, he assembled the company and told them that they had a right to petition against him if they wanted to, but that he thought any misunderstandings that existed could be settled smoothly.

"Who told you that we were getting up a petition?" a black man demanded.

DeShain looked at me and stammered wordlessly.

"There's an Uncle Tom in the theater!" a black girl yelled.

After the meeting a delegation of Negro men came to my office and took out their pocketknives and flashed them in my face.

"You got the hell off this job before we cut your bellybutton out!" they said.

I telephoned my white friends in the Works Progress Administration: "Transfer me at once to another job, or I'll be murdered."

Within twenty-four hours DeShain and I were given our papers. We shook hands and went our separate ways.

I was transferred to a white experimental theatrical company as a publicity agent and I resolved to keep my ideas to myself, or, better, to write them down and not attempt to translate them into reality.

## 12

One evening a group of Negro Communists called at my home and asked to speak to me in strict secrecy. I took them into my room and locked the door.

"Dick," they began abruptly, "the party wants you to attend a meeting Sunday."

"Why?" I asked. "I'm no longer a member."

"That's all right. They want you to be present," they said.

"Communists don't speak to me on the street," I said. "Now, why do you want me at a meeting?"

They hedged. They did not want to tell me.

"If you can't tell me, then I can't come," I said.

They whispered among themselves and finally decided to take me into their confidence.

"Dick, Ross is going to be tried," they said.

"For what?"

They recited a long list of political offenses of which they alleged that he was guilty.

"But what has that got to do with me?"

"If you come, you'll find out," they said.

"I'm not that naïve," I said. "I was suspicious now. Were they trying to lure me to a trial and expel me? This trial might turn out to be mine."

They swore that they had no intention of placing me on trial, that the party merely wanted me to

observe Ross's trial so that I might learn what happened to "enemies of the working class."

As they talked, my old love of witnessing something new came over me. I wanted to see this trial, but I did not want to risk being placed on trial myself.

"Listen," I told them. "I'm not guilty of Nealson's charges. If I showed up at this trial, it would seem that I am."

"No, it won't. Please come."

"All right. But, listen. If I'm tricked, I'll fight. You hear? I don't trust Nealson. I'm not a politician and I cannot anticipate all the funny moves of a man who spends his waking hours plotting."

Ross's trial took place that following Sunday afternoon. Comrades stood inconspicuously on guard about the meeting hall, at the doors, down the street, and along the hallways. When I appeared, I was ushered in quickly. I was tense. It was a rule that once you had entered a meeting of this kind you could not leave until the meeting was over; it was feared that you might go to the police and denounce them all.

Ross, the accused, sat alone at a table in the front of the hall, his face distraught. I felt sorry for him; yet I could not escape feeling that he enjoyed this. For him, this was perhaps the highlight of an otherwise bleak existence.

In trying to grasp why Communists hated intellectuals, my mind was led back again to the accounts I had read of the Russian Revolution. There had existed in Old Russia millions of poor, ignorant people who were exploited by a few educated, arrogant noblemen, and it became natural for the Russian Communists to associate betrayal with intellectualism. But there existed in the Western world an element that baffled and frightened the Communist Party: the prevalence of self-achieved literacy. Even a Negro, entrapped by ignorance and exploitation, — as I had been, — could, if he had the will and the love for it, learn to read and to understand the world in which he lived. And it was these people that the Communists could not understand.

The trial began in a quiet, informal manner. The comrades acted like a group of neighbors sitting in judgment upon one of their kind who had stolen a chicken. Anybody could ask and get the floor. There was absolute freedom of speech. Yet the meeting had an amazingly formal structure of its own, a structure that went as deep as the desire of men to live together.

A member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party rose and gave a description of the world situation. He spoke without emotion and



called up hard facts. He painted a horrible but magnificent picture of Fascism's aggression in Germany, Italy, and Japan.

I accepted the reason why the trial began in this manner. It was imperative that here he postulated against what or whom Ross's crimes had been committed. Therefore there had to be established in the minds of all present a vivid picture of mankind under oppression. And it was a true picture. Perhaps no organization on earth, save the Communist Party, possessed so detailed a knowledge of how workers lived, for its sources of information stemmed directly from the workers themselves.

The next speaker discussed the role of the Soviet Union as the world's lone workers' state—how the Soviet Union was hampered in its enemies, how the Soviet Union was trying to industrialize itself, what sacrifices it was making to help workers of the world to steer a path toward peace through the idea of collective security.

The facts presented so far were as true as any facts could be in this uncertain world. Yet no one word had been said of the accused, who sat listening like any other member. The time had not yet come to include him and his crimes in this picture of global struggle. An absolute had first to be established in the minds of the comrades so that they could measure the success or failure of their deeds by it.

Finally a speaker came forward and spoke of Chicago's South Side, the Negro population, their suffering and handicap, taking all that also to the world struggle. Then still another speaker followed and described the tasks of the Communist Party of the South Side. At last, the world, the national, and the local pictures had been fused into one overwhelming drama of moral struggle in which everybody in the hall was participating. This presentation had lasted for more than three hours, but it had enthroned a new sense of reality in the hearts of those present, a sense of man on earth. With the exception of the church and its myths and legends, there was no agency in the world so capable of making men feel the earth and the people upon it was the Communist Party.

Toward evening the direct charges against Ross were made, not by the leaders of the party, but by Ross's friends, those who knew him best! It was crushing. Ross wilted. His emotions could not withstand the weight of the moral pressure. No one was terrorized into giving information against him. They gave it willingly, citing dates, conversations, scenes. The black mass of Ross's wrongdoing emerged slowly and irrefutably.

The moment came for Ross to defend himself. He had been told that he had arranged for friends to

stand in his behalf, but he relied upon no one. Instead, strumbling; he tried to galk and his words would not come. The hall was as still as death. Guilt was written in every pore of his black skin. His hands shook. He held on to the edge of the table too deep on his feet. His personality, his sense of himself, had been obliterated. Yet he could not have been so humbled unless he had shared and accepted the vision that had crushed him, the common vision that bound us all together.

"Comrades," he said in a low, charged voice, "I'm guilty of all the charges, all of them."

His voice broke in a sob. No one prodded him. No one tortured him. No one threatened him. He was free to go out of the hall and never see another Communist. But he did not want to. He could not. The vision of a communal world had sunk down into his soul and it would never leave him until life left him. He talked on, outlining how he had erred, how he would reform.

I know, as I sat there, that there were many people who thought they knew life who had been skeptical of the Moscow trial. But they could not have been skeptical had they witnessed this astonishing trial. Ross had not been doped; he had been awakened. It was not a fear of the Communist Party that had made him confess, but a fear of the punishment that he would exact of himself that made him tell of his wrongdoings. The Communists had talked to him until they had given him new eyes with which to see his own crime. And then they sat back and listened to him tell how he had erred. He was one with all the members there, regardless of race or color; his heart was theirs and their hearts were his; and when a man reaches that state of kinship with others, that degree of oneness, or when a trial has made him kin after he has been sundered from them by wrongdoing, then he must rise and say, out of a sense of the deepest morality in the world: "I'm guilty. Forgive me."

This, to me, was a spectacle of glory; and yet, because it had condemned me, because it was blind and ignorant, I felt that it was a spectacle of horror. The blindness of their limited lives—lives truncated and impoverished by the oppression they had suffered long before they had ever heard of Communism—made them think that I was with their enemies. American life had so corrupted their consciousness that they were unable to recognize their friends when they saw them. I knew that if they had held state power I should have been declared guilty of treason and my execution would have followed. And I knew that they felt, with all the strength of their black blindness, that they were right.

I could not stay with the god. I was anxious to get out of the hall and into the streets and shake free from the gigantification that had hold of me. I rose and went to the door; a comrade shook his head, warning me that I could not leave until the trial had ended.

"You can't leave now," he said.  
"I'm going out of here," I said, my anger making my voice louder than I intended.

We glared at each other. Another comrade came running up. I stepped forward. The comrade who had rushed up gave the signal for me to be allowed to leave. They did not want violence, and neither did I. They stepped aside.

I went into the dark Chicago streets and walked home through the cold, filled with a sense of sadness. Once again I told myself that I must learn to stand alone. I did not feel so wounded by their rejection of me that I wanted to spend my days bleating about what they had done. Perhaps what I had already learned to feel in my childhood saved me from that futile path. I lay in bed that night and said to myself: "I'll be for them, even though they are not for me."

## 13

From the Federal Experimental Theater I was transferred to the Federal Writers' Project, and I tried to earn my bread by writing guidebooks. Many of the writers on the project were members of the Communist Party and they kept their revolutionary vows that restrained them from speaking to Senators of the working class. I sat beside them in the office, ate next to them in restaurants, and rode up and down in the elevators with them, but they always looked straight ahead, wordlessly.

After working on the project for a few months, I was made acting supervisor of essays and straightway I ran into political difficulties. One morning the administrator of the project called me into his office.

"Wright, who are your friends on this project?" he asked.

"I don't know," I said. "Why?"

"Well, you ought to find out soon," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"Some people are asking for your removal on the ground that you are incompetent," he said.

"Who are they?"

"He named several of my erstwhile comrades. Yes, it had come to that. They were trying to take the bread out of my mouth.

"What do you propose to do about their complaints?" I asked.

"Nothing," he said, laughing. "I think I understand what's happening here. I'm not going to let them drive you off this job."

I thanked him and rose to go to the door. Something in his words had not sounded right. I turned and faced him.

"This job?" I repeated. "What do you mean?"

"You mean to say that you don't know?" he asked.

"Know what? What are you talking about?"

"Why did you leave the Federal Negro Theater?"

"I had trouble there. They drove me off the job, the Negroes did."

"And you don't think that they had any encouragement?" he asked me ironically.

I sat again. This was deadly. I gaped at him.

"You needn't fear here," he said. "You work, write."

"It's hard to believe that," I murmured.

"Forget it," he said.

But the worst was yet to come. One day at noon

I closed my desk and went down in the elevator.

When I reached the first floor of the building, I saw

a picket line moving to and fro in the streets. Many

of the men and women carrying placards were old

friends of mine, and they were chanting for higher

wages for Works Progress Administration artists and

writers. It was not the kind of picket line that one

was not supposed to cross, and as I started away

from the door I heard my name shouted:—

"There's Wright, that goddamn Trotskyite!"

"We know you, you —!"

"Wright's a traitor!"

For a moment it seemed that I ceased to live. I

had now reached that point where I was cursed aloud

in the busy streets of America's second-largest city.

It shook me as nothing else had.

Days passed. I continued on my job, where I

functioned as the shop chairman of the union which

I had helped to organize, though my election as shop

chairman had been bitterly opposed by the party.

In their efforts to nullify my influence in the union,

my old comrades were willing to kill the union itself.

As May Day of 1936 approached, it was voted by

the union membership that we should march in the

public procession. On the morning of May Day I

received printed instructions as to the time and place

where our union contingent would assemble to join

the parade. At noon I hurried to the spot and found

that the parade was already in progress. In vain I

searched for the banners of my union local. Where

were they? I went up and down the streets, asking

for the location of my local.

"Oh, that local's gone fifteen minutes ago,"



Negro told me. "If you're going to march, you'd better fall in somewhere."

I thanked him and walked through the milling crowds. Suddenly I heard my name called. I turned. To my left was the Communist Party's South Side section, lined up and ready to march.

"Come here!" an old party friend called to me.

I walked over to him.

"Aren't you marching today?" he asked me.

"I missed my union local," I told him.

"What the hell," he said. "March with us."

"I don't know," I said, remembering my last visit to the headquarters of the party, and my status as an "enemy."

"This is May Day," he said. "Get into the ranks."

"You know the trouble I've had," I said.

"That's nothing," he said. "Everybody's marching today."

"I don't think I'd better," I said, shaking my head.

"Are you scared?" he asked. "This is *May Day*."

He caught my right arm and pulled me into line beside him. I stood talking to him, asking him about his work, about common friends.

"Get out of our ranks!" a voice barked.

I turned. A white Communist, a leader of the district of the Communist Party, Cy Perry, a slender, close-cropped fellow, stood glaring at me.

"I — It's May Day and I want to march," I said.

"Get out!" he shouted.

"I was invited here," I said.

I turned to the Negro Communist who had invited me into the ranks. I did not want public violence. I looked at my friend. He turned his eyes away. He was afraid. I did not know what to do.

"You asked me to march here," I said to him.

He did not answer.

"Tell him that you did invite me," I said, pulling his sleeve.

"I'm asking you for the last time to get out of our ranks!" Cy Perry shouted.

I did not move. I had intended to, but I was beset by so many impulses that I could not act. Another white Communist came to assist Perry. Perry caught hold of my collar and pulled at me. I resisted. They held me fast. I struggled to free myself.

"Turn me loose!" I said.

Hands lifted me bodily from the sidewalk; I felt myself being pitched headlong through the air. I saved myself from landing on my head by clutching a curbstone with my hands. Slowly I rose and stood. Perry and his assistant were glaring at me. The rows of white and black Communists were look-

ing at me with cold eyes of non-recognition. I could not quite believe what had happened, even though my hands were smarting and bleeding. I had suffered a public, physical assault by two white Communists with black Communists looking on. I could not move from the spot. I was empty of any idea about what to do. But I did not feel belligerent. I had outgrown my childhood.

Suddenly, the vast ranks of the Communist Party began to move. Scarlet banners with the hammer and sickle emblem of world revolution were lifted, and they fluttered in the May breeze. Drums beat. Voices were chanting. The tramp of many feet shook the earth. A long line of set-faced men and women, white and black, flowed past me.

I followed the procession to the Loop and went into Grant Park Plaza and sat upon a bench. I was not thinking; I could not think. But an objectivity of vision was being born within me. A surging sweep of many odds and ends came together and formed an attitude, a perspective. "They're blind," I said to myself. "Their enemies have blinded them with too much oppression." I lit a cigarette and I heard a song floating out over the sunlit air: —

"Arise you prisoners of starvation!"

I remembered the stories I had written, the stories in which I had assigned a role of honor and glory to the Communist Party, and I was glad that they were down in black and white, were finished. For I knew in my heart that I should never be able to write that way again, should never be able to feel with that simple sharpness about life, should never again express such passionate hope, should never again make so total a commitment of faith.

"A better world's in birth . . ."

The procession still passed. Banners still floated. Voices of hope still chanted.

I headed toward home alone, really alone now, telling myself that in all the sprawling immensity of our mighty continent the least-known factor of living was the human heart, the least-sought goal of being was a way to live a human life. Perhaps, I thought, out of my tortured feelings I could fling a spark into this darkness. I would try, not because I wanted to but because I felt that I had to if I were to live at all.

I would hurl words into this darkness and wait for an echo; and if an echo sounded, no matter how faintly, I would send other words to tell, to march, to fight, to create a sense of the hunger for life that gnaws in us all, to keep alive in our hearts a sense of the inexpressibly human.

## Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

100-41674

:mcg

TO : Director, FBI

DATE: February 26, 1945

FROM: SAC, New York City

SUBJECT: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER C  
(Bureau file 100-157464)

Reference is made to the report of Special Agent [REDACTED] made at New York City on September 5, 1944 entitled RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT; INTERNAL SECURITY C. This report sets out a lead for the New York Field Division, "After careful consideration interview the subject WRIGHT concerning his association with the Communist Party."

After very careful consideration it is felt inadvisable to interview WRIGHT particularly as the basis of his break with the Communist Party, as appears from his recent articles in the Atlantic Monthly Magazine, is the Communist Party's failure to be sufficiently radical and militant with respect to the advancement of the Negro. These articles also indicate a complete disapproval by WRIGHT of the American way of life.

Also considered in arriving at the decision not to interview WRIGHT are the facts that he has been classified 4-F due to severe psycho-neurosis and his contacts with his Local Selective Service Board have reflected his interest in the problem of the Negro to be almost an obsession.

In view of the subject's public break with the Communist Party, he is no longer being carried as a Key Figure by the New York Field Division, however, a Security Index Card on him is being maintained by the New York Office due to his militant attitude toward the Negro problem.

The only information secured by this office concerning WRIGHT that has not already been reported is that he was listed as a member of the National Committee of the International Labor Defense in a pamphlet entitled, "Equal Justice and Democracy in the Service of Victory," published by the International Labor Defense in September 1944. WRIGHT'S residence address has been verified as Apt. C-23, 89 Lefferts Place, Brooklyn, New York, as of February 15, 1945.

This investigation is being placed in a closed status by the New York Field Division. In the event further investigation becomes necessary, it will be reported under a Security Matter C character.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/ke

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# New Times

IN **BLACK BOY**, Richard Wright has written a furious and terrifying story of the impact of the Jimcrow system upon human beings in the deep South. The result is a picture which challenges America.

There may be exaggerations in the book.

Many of the incidents may be highly fictional, and never really happened to Wright. But what difference does that make if they happened to some other young Negro. The point is that they should not happen to any Negro and the conditions which corrode the Negro family must be eliminated. For they victimize not only the Negro citizen; they suffocate the poor whites to a more or less degree, and retard the development of the whole South.

It does no good to run away from this essential significance of the book for the purpose of grappling with the secondary aspects, some of which are contained in the book, and others of which surround the author's views and his writing of the book. It is of supreme importance that this main picture of the life and death of the Negro under the reign of white supremacy should hit America with full force. For it concerns America. Any attempt to bypass this over-all picture will lessen its force and thereby lead to an underestimation of its starkness and blunt the sharp need for correctives. When this main picture is changed in its principal outlines, the derivative secondary aspects will disappear. But until it does, naturally there are going to be all kinds of corollaries, badly



by Benjamin J. Davis, Jr.

focused perspectives, and misleading ambiguities and conclusions—many of which mar **Black Boy**.

**THE** book is intensely subjective. In fact, it is limited by its subjectiveness. But people are not born subjective, and it is clear that a young Negro who has to run the gauntlet of every type of oppression—just short of lynching—has subjectiveness forced into his marrow. This heavy pressure pushes him to view the world in which he lives entirely through glasses colored by his own personal suffering from national oppression, which suffering in one form or another he meets every day. Those who complain of that intense subjectivity are forever stopped from doing so, unless they realize what brought it about, and also help to eradicate the diseased soil from which it grows.

It is important, however, that this subjectiveness be overcome. It can be done and is being done since there are new trends and factors which make the overcoming possible. It is also necessary to overcome it, lest one fall into the trap of frustration and defeatism which the white supremacy forces have set. **Black Boy** says some wholly unacceptable things about the Negro's capacity for genuine emotion. Here the author's subjectivity has overcome reality. For the truly remarkable achievement of the Negro is that he has made such singular contributions to America—culturally and musically and in all other fields—despite the system of national oppression which tends to thwart his every effort. The point is: Will Wright himself be able

## Some Impressions Of **Black Boy**

to overcome this limitation of subjectivity imposed upon him in order that he may see clearly, and participate with, the forces which would destroy the myth of white supremacy. Inasmuch as Wright has attained literary prominence, and some circles have thrust upon him the mantle of spokesman for his people he above all must maintain a clear head.

**THERE** is no doubt that Wright wields a brilliant and stormy pen. Few story tellers are his equal. But is this sufficient when there are brilliant writers on both sides of the barricades. It is vitally important that the artist who reflects and the artist who sees the way out should be one and the same person. For both these factors exist in the objective real world, outside one's self. Jimcrow is here, yet Jimcrow is also being driven defeated from the scene. Life is not static. One has to see both to be realistic, and to shape the future.

Wright does not see the positive, constructive side, and therefore the mirror of his pen does not give a complete picture. He omits the biggest new thing which is happening in the world today—the main progressive currents from which even the South is not immune. Apparently he is isolated from these developments—and far removed from the people. Such isolationism can lead to stagnation—to form without content. It is pretty difficult to see what happened in 1915 if one is isolated from 1945. While Wright is, of course, not responsible for **Black Boy** conditions, he is, however, responsible for his own voluntary act of withdrawal from the forces which are among the leaders of the fight for a better world. He can blame himself.

INDEXED

NOT RECORDED

APR 18 1945

This is a clipping from  
page 9 sec. 1 ofTHE WORKER  
Date 4-1-45Clipped at the seat of  
Government

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY [signature]

Index + file

PRESCOTT

**R**ICHARD WRIGHT is the author of one of the most widely read and hotly debated novels of recent years, "Native Son," an acknowledged leader of his race. But the way was long and the road was rocky. Not very many years ago he was just "a black boy in Mississippi," which means few men in the world have begun life under a burden of



Richard Wright

graver handicaps or faced more difficult obstacles. That he has gone so far, accomplished so much, entitles Mr. Wright to an honored rank among that traditionally American select group, the "self-made men." His success story does him great credit. The troubles he knew in his childhood and youth were terrible, the wounds he received deep. He carries indelible scars and still burns with bitter fury. The life he knew as a child is

not over. It has not changed. Hundreds of thousands of other little black boys are enduring it today. Such a life is usually completely outside the comprehension of white Americans, either Southern or Northern. But those who care to can now share it, in Mr. Wright's "Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth."

This is a story from America's own lower depths. No nostalgic memories of childhood are these, no sentimental yearnings for innocent years when the hills were so much higher. Mr. Wright's childhood was an obscene and monstrous nightmare, a malign inferno that might well have destroyed him utterly. He survived, but not unscathed. "Black Boy" is not the work of an objective artist or of an open mind. It could not have been. The neuroses, the over-emphasis, the lack of balance and the emotion recollected in turmoil are the bitter fruit of an old injustice.

**Shows Harsh Dramatic Power**

Mr. Wright in this explosive autobiography does not suggest any constructive means for improving the lot of the Negro in this country. Like Lillian Smith, he can only display suffering and cruelty with harsh dramatic power, he can only arouse anger and sympathy. If enough such books are written, if enough millions of people read them, maybe, some day, in the fullness of time, there will be a greater understanding and a more true democracy.

Richard Wright grew up in the slums of Mem-

phis and in the rural slums of Mississippi near Jackson. His father deserted his mother, so the poverty he knew was double the usual lot. The two dominant influences of his childhood were hunger and fear, a gnawing hunger that kept him weak and half-starved and a fear that grew and multiplied and filled his entire life. He feared his mother's anger, the whippings of his uncles and aunts, the abuse of other children, ghosts, white men with their inexplicable and capricious cruelties, fear itself. Terror was his companion night and day, violence the norm of all experience. Foul language and foul habits, ignorance and superstition, primitive religious fanaticism surrounded him on all sides. The proud, sensitive, intelligent child looked up from below at a grotesque, outrageous world.

Some of the evils he knew were caused by poverty and ignorance alone and would not have been much different in Ireland or Iran. But even these evils were intensified by the shibboleth of color and many others were caused by race alone. Mr. Wright's uncle was murdered by a white man and no one dared even to protest. A boyhood acquaintance was lynched. He learned to be servile and obsequious, to say "sir" to drunken and contemptible white men, to conceal his thoughts and emotions beneath a mask of humble good humor and deference. Not to do so, to forget the "sir" or the "mister," to aspire to learn a skilled trade, to show resentment of sneers, condescension and abuse, was to invite "trouble." And trouble could mean death.

**Author Distorts Bleak Story**

"Black Boy" only takes Mr. Wright into his late teens when he escaped to Chicago. His experiences there and in radical politics will doubtless be material for another book. It could conceivably be an intellectually more interesting book, one more concerned with thought and ideas. But it could hardly be a more emotionally dreadful one. Part of the raw shock of "Black Boy" is caused by Mr. Wright's excessive determination to omit nothing, to emphasize mere filth. This springs from a lack of artistic discrimination and selectivity. He has not added to the bleak tragedy of his story; he has only distorted it and confused it with such material.

It is also obvious in reading "Black Boy," and Mr. Wright admits it, that his is not a typical story. He felt isolated from Negroes as well as from whites; other Negroes resented their lot but did not feel at all so acutely as he did. Perhaps with the hindsight of the years in which he has brooded and with a natural literary instinct to capitalize and dramatize his emotions Mr. Wright has exaggerated his sufferings. It would be only human if he had.

"Black Boy" has little subtlety, little light and shade, no restraint. It is written in a continuously strained and feverish manner. It is over-written. But it is powerful, moving and horrifying. It is certain to be extravagantly praised and roundly condemned. It will be widely read.

\*BLACK BOY: A Record of Childhood and Youth. By Richard Wright. 228 pages. Harper. \$2.50

INDEXED  
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86 MAR 20 1945

This is a clipping from page 21 of the New York Times for

Feb. 28, 1945  
Clipped at the Seat of Government.

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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTG/bce

59 MAR 24 1945



STANDARD FORM NO. 64

**Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT**

HGF  
100-41674

TO : Director, FBI

DATE: April 17, 1945

FROM : SAC, New York

SUBJECT: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER - C  
(Bureau File 100-157464)

Reference is made to New York letter to the Bureau dated February 26, 1945 in the captioned matter wherein it was pointed out that in view of the subject's public break with the Communist Party, he is no longer being carried as a key figure by the New York Field Office, but that a Security Index card on him was being maintained by this office. This statement was made in error in view of the fact that although the New York Office recommended to the Bureau by letter dated June 28, 1944 that a Security Index Card be prepared on the subject, no authorization was actually received by the Bureau to prepare such a card.

Therefore, no Security Index card is being maintained in the New York Office on the subject unless contrary advice is received from the Bureau.

*let New York  
5-7-45*  
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DATE 8-25-81 BY 88612/ka**

**RECORDED** 1 - 746-16

**EX-26**

VB  
100-157464 -1

May 7, 1945

RECORDED

SAC, New York

John Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER - C

Reference is made to your letter of April 17, 1945, in the above captioned matter.

In view of the militant attitude of the subject toward the Negro problem, as set forth in your letter of February 26, 1945, it is believed that you should submit a recommendation for the preparation of a Security Index Card in this case.

You may consider this letter as the Bureau's approval of such a recommendation and you should place a Security Index Card in your files at this time.

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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTG/lka

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION	
Mr. Tolson	MAILED 8
Mr. E. A. Tamm	
Mr. Clegg	
Mr. Coffey	
Mr. Glavin	
Mr. Ladd	
Mr. Nichols	
Mr. Rosen	
Mr. Tracy	
Mr. Carson	
Mr. Egan	
Mr. Hendon	
Mr. Pennington	
Mr. Quinn	
Mr. Nease	
Miss Gandy	

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

MAY 12 1945



Los Angeles Cal

June 22-45

Dear Sir. RICHARD WRIGHT

Richard Wright the negro who wrote  
12 million black voices and Black boy books  
should be toned as they are spreading  
race hatred and causing disunity.

It seems to feel as because of American  
prejudice that the American negro is  
living under horrible conditions. Well  
I am an American negro and proud  
of it because we colored people in  
America have come a long ways in  
the last seventy years. Only in America  
have the negro been as successful.

If you get a copy of the negro hand book  
of 1942 and turn over to page any of its  
pages you will see just how successful  
that we colored people are. <sup>157464</sup> <sup>157464</sup>

Richard Wright doesn't approve of our America  
way of life we wish you would put him  
in the Army on the first line in the  
Pacific theater of war and if a Jap kill  
him give the Jap a medal. And if you

DATE 8-25-81

5008792

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

RECORDED & INDEXED

JUN 26 1945

ack. 6-30-45  
b7c

Believe me mister we are tired and disgusted and discouraged. And if you don't want America behind the eighth ball you had better put a stop to some of this run American literature. Because we want peace and not having to be dragged.

Don't do that for god sake but that Adole pated Laps books for they are driving us nuts. And besides he put to much filth in his books.

you know what Adolph Hitler says say I evade and conquer. Well if you don't want that to happen in America you had better put a stop to these American

uncle Toms with there type writer from writing so much belly aching hog wash.

Because take it from me mister there are only sixty million people in Japan and she is fighting all most 2 Billion people one billion of those people are colord.

And if those Billion colord people wasent disgusted and discouraged this war could have been over long ago.

We colord people don't mind the truth but we do hate lies or any thing that distorts the peace of mind.

The back stabin Southern white people are on one side nagging send the colord people back to Africa and a bunch of damn fools like Richard Wright

are on the other side lying, complaning criticizing so we Billion colord people say. This is your

Washington, reporter

If enough such books are written, if enough millions of people read them, maybe, someday, there will be a greater understanding and a more true democracy."

—Orville Prescott,  
N. Y. Times



# BLACK BOY

By RICHARD WRIGHT  
Author of *Native Son*

"A deeply disturbing document in race relations."—Howard Mumford Jones, *Saturday Review of Literature*

"Possibly the most sensational confession of an American boyhood ever put on paper."—Harry Hansen, *N. Y. World-Telegram*

A Book-of-the-Month Club  
Selection for March

At all bookstores • \$2.50

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100 - 177464 - 17

VB

b7c

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

June 30, 1945

EX-61

[Redacted]  
Los Angeles, California  
[Redacted]

b7c

I desire to acknowledge your letter of June 22, 1945, with enclosure.

You may be assured that the content of your communication has been very carefully noted and I want to thank you for your interest in communicating with me.

If in the future you should obtain information which you feel is of value to this Bureau, please feel free to communicate directly with the Special Agent in Charge of our Los Angeles Field Division which is located at 900 Security Building, Los Angeles 13, California.

Sincerely yours,

John Edgar Hoover  
Director

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTG/ace

*Handwritten signature/initials*

MAILED

56 PM '45

- Mr. Tolson
- Mr. E. A. Tamm
- Mr. Clegg
- Mr. Coffey
- Mr. Glavin
- Mr. Ladd
- Mr. Nichols
- Mr. Rosen
- Mr. Tracy
- Mr. Carson
- Mr. Egan
- Mr. Hendon
- Mr. Pennington
- Mr. Quinn Tamm
- Mr. Nease
- Miss Gandy

*Handwritten initials*

104  
JUL 9 1945

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER  
DIRECTOR



Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

June 30, 1945

[REDACTED]  
Los Angeles, California  
[REDACTED]

67C

I desire to acknowledge your letter of June 22, 1945, with enclosure.

You may be assured that the content of your communication has been very carefully noted and I want to thank you for your interest in communicating with me.

If in the future you should obtain information which you feel is of value to this Bureau, please feel free to communicate directly with the Special Agent in Charge of our Los Angeles Field Division which is located at 900 Security Building, Los Angeles 13, California.

Sincerely yours,

*J. E. Hoover*  
John Edgar Hoover  
Director

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTG/lca



37 JUL 21 1945

100-157464-17

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS



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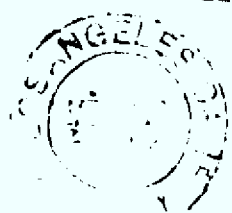
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Los Angeles, California

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TO WRITER  
UNCLAIMED







**Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice**

New York 7, New York

IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER TO  
FILE NO. 100-41674

WHR

Director, FBI

RE: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER - C  
Bureau File 100-157464

May 18, 1945

Dear Sir:

The copy of the Security Index Card maintained at this field office relative to the above-named individual has been revised and is now captioned as follows:

WRIGHT, RICHARD NATHANIEL  
NEGRO

NATIVE BORN

COMMUNIST

Apartment C-23  
89 Lefferts Place  
Brooklyn, New York (Res.)

Born Sept. 4-08  
Natchez, Miss.

Free-lance writer at residence (Bus.)

REFER TO BUREAU LETTER DATED MAY 7, 1945 IN INSTANT CASE. NEW YORK CARD HAS BEEN MADE UP.

In accordance with Bureau instructions, a white 5" x 8" card, captioned as above, has been prepared and filed in the Confidential Security Index Card File of this office. Appropriate disposition has been made of the card previously maintained in the Card File, in accordance with existing instructions. It is suggested that the original Security Index Card maintained at the Seat of Government be revised in agreement with the caption above set out.

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DATE 8-25-81 BY 8889/lee

Very truly yours,

E. E. Conroy  
RECORDED  
E. E. CONROY  
Special Agent in Charge

FY - 58

~~WHEN THE ACTION REQUIRED HEREBY HAS BEEN COMPLETED, THIS LETTER SHOULD NOT BE FILED BUT SHOULD BE DESTROYED.~~

RECORDED 100-157464-19

EX-8

July 6, 1945

b7c

[REDACTED]

Los Angeles, California

[REDACTED]

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter dated June 18, 1945, with enclosure.

The material which you have submitted has been carefully reviewed and I want to thank you for your interest and courtesy in writing to this Bureau.

In the event you receive additional information which you believe to be of interest to the FBI, I want you to feel free to communicate directly with the Special Agent in Charge of our Los Angeles field Division which is located at 900 Security Building, Los Angeles 13, California.

Sincerely yours,

John Edgar Hoover  
Director

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 B19/BCE

Mr. Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. E. A. Tamm \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Coffey \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Glavin \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Ladd \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Tracy \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Carson \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Egan \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Hendon \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Pennington \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Quinn Tamm \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Nease \_\_\_\_\_  
Miss Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

JUL 13 1945

b7c

John Edgar Hoover  
DTC  
15

72



JOHN EDGAR HOOVER  
DIRECTOR



Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

July 6, 1945

[REDACTED]  
Los Angeles, California  
[REDACTED]

*No such address  
VSL b7c*

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter dated June 18, 1945, with enclosure.

The material which you have submitted has been carefully reviewed and I want to thank you for your interest and courtesy in writing to this Bureau.

In the event you receive additional information which you believe to be of interest to the FBI, I want you to feel free to communicate directly with the Special Agent in Charge of our Los Angeles field Division which is located at 900 Security Building, Los Angeles 13, California.

Sincerely yours,

*J. E. Hoover*  
John Edgar Hoover  
Director



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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BJA/bja

165  
JUL 13 1945

100-157464-19

*File-5-17d*

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.  
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CALIF.

10-22420  
FBI

Not in Director's

HOLLYWOOD,  
CALIF.

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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8Bry/bca

Los Angeles Calif  
June 18 - 45

Dear sir

Richard Wright the negro who wrote  
Black boy and native son books are doing no good  
and a lot of harm they are causing disunity  
and spreading race hatred and if you people dont  
want America tore up the same as Germany  
you had better put a stop to such people as that  
poor old ass of a Southern Senator with his  
back to Africa move next and such old fools as  
that poor crazy old Richard Wright. We colored people  
are good natured all we want is justice a good  
job with good pay for work well done. Every time  
we turn around some one is complaining nagging  
constantly criticizing every thing we do  
Richard Wright seem to be run happy in America  
so we wish to god he would leave and go some  
place else for he is getting on our nerves.  
I and all the other colored people know that  
ninety percent of the trash that he put in  
his books are lies, but if people in the  
should get a hold of Black boy I'm awfull  
afraid Uncle Sam's face is going to be red  
for you cant rule a German if you cant  
rule America. And the lies that poor sick  
frank fool Richard Wright put in his books sure  
America any good in the foreignness

ack.  
25-43  
676

eye sight. we colored people want Richard Wright's  
books banned if he cant write a story with out  
trying to agitate race trouble we want him  
to pick him self a new vocation. Just get  
a copy of his books and go through them  
we dont see why he isnt in the Army any  
way. If he went to India or some other place  
and saw how horrible those people live then  
he would see how far advanced we are.  
After all we colored people are doing the best  
we can if you would get a copy of the Negro  
hand book for 1942 you would see just how  
well we are doing. we are only a small race of  
people. we colored people are very discouraged  
and that is the reason sixty million little bitty  
Japanese in Japan can fight all most two Billion  
people with out a allie and hold out so long.  
Because that Billion colored people are on the  
point of giving up. After all this is not our war  
and if we win we dont get <sup>nothing</sup> <sup>nothing</sup> <sup>nothing</sup> I suppose there is  
nothing to do but just say to hell with the whole  
bloody mess.

this is from that poor old fool book Black boy  
this is enough to provoke the devil

b7C



# What The People Say

toxicants at the early age of six.

There isn't any question about the undemocratic practices in America. It doesn't matter if one is a resident of the North or South, as Black Boy was the flaring discrepancies between the ideals and the realities are sufficient to floor the idealist and shock the realist. But it is hard to imagine a life like Black Boy's. It seems that someone would have come into the picture to redeem our faith in human-kind. Perhaps "Black Boy" is that character. In the face of all the circumstances a flicker of ambition kept within him. He even possessed the "foreign" desire to write.

Richard Wright has little pride in his own people for he says:

"Whenever I thought of the essential bleakness of black life in America, I knew that Negroes had never been allowed to catch the full spirit of Western civilization, that they lived somehow in it but not of it. And when I brooded upon the cultural barrenness of black life, I wondered if clean, positive tenderness, love, honor, loyalty, and the capacity to remember were native with man. I asked myself if these human qualities were not fostered, won, struggled and suffered for, preserved in ritual from one generation to another."

As I reflect about the human qualities of Western civilization, I wonder about the "positive tenderness" of the whites. Could there be much genuine feeling within the hearts of a people who could stand by and permit conditions such as exist in "Black Boy" to prevail? What kind of people are these who kept others in slavery, freed them in name only, tried to make sure that they didn't become enlightened through education, signed restrictive covenants to keep them living in the slums, maintained the idea of white supremacy? The only "genuine passion" that I ever saw exhibited was the unleashed spirit that moved the mobs to lynch.

How hollow are the memories of white America that send Gold Star mothers over to Europe to visit the graves of their fallen black sons in Jim-Crow transports! How hollow are the memories of white America that maintain a Jim-Crow army and navy in the second World War. Where is this grand compassion of Western civilization? This "emotional strength," this "clean, positive

tenderness, love, honor, loyalty," leaves me groping in the darkness.

Negroes do feel deeply! Could they have given America folk music otherwise? It is agreed that our masses need education. Through education they will arrive. But I believe that the way of life of the Negro, the humble folk, with the white humble folk, is the only redeeming factor in America. It's the humble soul that makes life livable anywhere. It is he who offers a helping hand in the time of trouble; it is he who practices the golden rule; it is he who doesn't clamor for wealth and position, (the shallow possessions.) . . . In happy contrast to the materialists, the capitalists, the exploiters, he makes a pretty picture. It is he, the meek soul, black and white, who will one day inherit the earth.—Ruth Apilado, Maywood, Ill.

## Sorry For Race Haters

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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8BT/gha

100-157464-19




COPY

COPY

Los Angeles, Calif.  
June 18 - 45

Dear Sir:

Richard Wright the negro who wrote black boy and Native Son books are doing no good and a lot of harm they are causing disunity and sowing race hatred and if you people dont want America tore up the same as Germany you had better put a stop to sutch people as that poor old ass of a Southern Senator with his back to Africa movement and sutch old fools as that poor crazy old Richard Wright. We colored people are good natured all we want is justice a good job with good pay for work well done. Every time we turn around some one is complaining nagging constantly criticizing every thing we do. Richard Wright seem to be unhappy in America so we wish to God he would leave and go some place else for he is getting on our nerves. I and all the other colored people know that ninty percent of the trash that he puts in his books are lies, but if people in Germany should get a hold of Black boy I'm awfull afraid Uncle Sam's face is going to be red for you cant rule a German if you cant rule America. And the lies that poor sick braned fool Richard Wright put in his books sure dont do America any good in the foreigner's eye sight. We colored people want Richard Wright's books baned if he cant write a story without trying to agitate race trouble we want him to pick himself a new vocation. Just get a copy of his books and go through them. We dont see why he isn't in the Army anyway. If he went to India or some other place and saw how horrible those people live then he would see how far advanced we are. After all we colored people are doing the best we can if you would get a copy of the negro hand book for 1942 you would see just how well we are doing. We are only a small race of people. We colored people are very discouraged and that is the reason sixty million little bity Japanese can fight all most two billion people without a allie and hole out so long. Because that Billion colored people are on the point of giving up. After all this is not our war and if we win we loose So I suppose there is nothing to do but just say to hell with the hole bloody mess.

 b7c  
This is from that poor old fools book Black boy this is enough to provoke the devil.

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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP1 BT/bee

Los Angeles Cal

July 145

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DATE 8-25-81 BY SP6 BT/600

We are writing you people in  
hope you will be able to have books  
like Black boy and also native son  
by the negre Richard Wright <sup>RICHARD WRIGHT</sup>  
banned as he is spreading race hatred  
and causing disunity. If you  
will look through the mans books  
you will see how he rant and  
rave like a mad man. It is terrible  
and also he use to much filthy  
expressions the white writers don't  
do that. <sup>RECORDED 100-157464-29</sup>  
<sup>INDEXED</sup> Why should he be so for  
the sake of unity please have his  
books banned. they are doing no good

and a lot of harm.

If the negro another  
cant write a book with trying to stir  
up race hatred between the white  
and colored folks it will be better  
for them to not write at all.

RECEIVED JUL 16 11 30 AM '45  
RECEIVED JUL 7 9 26 AM '45  
U. S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE  
F B I  
RECEIVED SECURITY DIV  
JUL 6 7 06 PM '45



Los Angeles Cal  
July 1-45

Dear Sir

We are writing you people in hope you will be able to have books like black boy and also Native Son by the Negro Richard Wright baned as he is spreading race hatred and causing disunity. If you will look through the mans books you will see how he rant and rave like a mad man. It is terrible and also he use to much filthy expressions the white writers don't do that so why should he. So for the sake of unity please have his books baned. They are doing no good and a lot of harm.

If the Negro author cant write a book without trying to stir up race hatred between the white and colored folks it will be better for them to not write at all.

[REDACTED] b7c

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-81 BY *SP8 BTJ/bia*

LVO  
100-157464 - 20 ✓  
RECORDED  
EX-1

Mr. James M. McInerney  
Acting Head, Criminal Division  
John Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

July 11, 1945

PUBLICATIONS OF RICHARD WRIGHT

Enclosed herewith for such consideration as you may deem appropriate  
is a copy of a communication received by this Bureau from [redacted]  
[redacted] Los Angeles, California. The letter of [redacted]  
has been acknowledged by this Bureau.

b7c

cc - Assistant Attorney General  
Herbert Wechsler

Enclosure

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 1-25-81 BY SP1 BTJ/bce

Mr. Tolson  
Mr. E. A. Tamm  
Mr. Clegg  
Mr. Coffey  
Mr. Glavin  
Mr. Ladd  
Mr. Nichols  
Mr. Rosen  
Mr. Tracy  
Mr. Carson  
Mr. Egan  
Mr. Hendon  
Mr. Pennington  
Mr. Quinn Tamm  
Mr. Nease  
Miss Gandy

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

MAILED 15

★ JUL 11 1945 P.M.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

58 JUL 16 1945

b7c

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20  
JUL 11  
11-PM  
1945

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE TO AVOID  
PAYMENT OF POSTAGE, \$300

REASON FOR NON-DELIVERY  
Moved - No Address  
Unknown to Addressee  
No Such Number  
Firm Discontinued No Order  
Carrier's Initials

Los Angeles, California

JUL 11 1945  
LOS ANGELES  
CALIF.

b7C

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 6-25-88 BY SP4/BJA

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER  
DIRECTOR



Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

July 11, 1945

[REDACTED]  
Los Angeles, California  
[REDACTED]

I have received your letter of July 1, 1945, and appreciate your interest in making the observations contained therein available to me. In the event you receive additional information which you believe to be of interest to the Federal Bureau of Investigation please feel free to communicate directly with the Special Agent in Charge of our Los Angeles Field Division whose address is 900 Security Building, Los Angeles 13, California, telephone Madison 7241.

Sincerely yours,

*J. E. Hoover*  
John Edgar Hoover  
Director

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/bw  
*File Fair*

EX-105 1945

9

LVO  
100-157464-20

RECORDED

July 11, 1945

b7C

[REDACTED]  
Los Angeles, California  
[REDACTED]

I have received your letter of July 1, 1945, and appreciate your interest in making the observations contained therein available to me. In the event you receive additional information which you believe to be of interest to the Federal Bureau of Investigation please feel free to communicate directly with the Special Agent in Charge of our Los Angeles Field Division whose address is 900 Security Building, Los Angeles 13, California, telephone Madison 7241.

Sincerely yours,

John Edgar Hoover  
Director

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/Kce

LVO

Mr. Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. E. A. Tamm \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Coffey \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Glavin \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Ladd \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Tracy \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Carson \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Egan \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Hendon \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Pennington \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Quinn Tamm \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Nease \_\_\_\_\_  
Miss Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

Handwritten initials and signature: "JH" and "Eut"

b7C

Handwritten number: "234"

88347

MICHAEL WRIGHT

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 3-25-81 BY SP6 BTJ/bce

RECORDED 100-157414-11  
EX-22 F H I  
30 JUL 6 1945

30 JUL 1 1945 284

FILE 2  
anonymous and  
hands-painted notes  
necessary

Los Angeles Cal

July - 4 - 45

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/bce

Dear Sir

do you see this trash here this  
nigger is one of the biggest spreaders of race  
hatred there is in the world he is nothing  
but a black nazi and for that reason we  
people think it is best to ban his books  
as they are doing no good and a lot of harm  
other people have wrote to you folks to  
have this mans books baned. They are to  
filthy and they are giving the whole world  
a wrong empession about the way the negre  
live in America. we do not know how  
to have undesirable books baned so  
we are writing to you folks so please  
do some thing to put a ~~hand~~ <sup>stop</sup> on this lying  
black beast trash. He is ~~doing nothing~~ <sup>trying to stir up race trouble</sup>  
but trying to stir up race trouble. ~~he is~~  
only thirty seven ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> do wish you folks  
would put him in the Army. ~~we~~  
Get a copy of his books and you will  
see just how that lying dog is ~~going~~  
trying to agitate trouble between the

RECORDED

INDEXED

157414-32

JUL 10 1945

11 dec  
ENC.

199

b7c



black and white people in the South.

Sincerely

[REDACTED]

b7c

general delivery  
[REDACTED]

RECEIVED  
JUL 27 11 35 AM '68  
F. B. I.  
U. S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE  
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

...thing is  
William Hampton,  
Countryside, Ill.

### "Black Boy" Not Picture Of Negro

It seems that I've lived in America a million years; it's only a life time. It seems that I've dwelled in the slums as long; that, too, is but a life time. It seems that I've known intimately a zillion black boys and girls; there have only been those that I have met in the actual extent of my age, over thirty years. — In all my experience as a black American, I've never known a black child like the portrait Richard Wright paints in his recent book, "Black Boy." "Black Boy," like "Native Son," is a problem novel. Its purpose is to uncover the deplorable conditions under which our children exist, thereby stimulating corrective measures. The objective is fine. I hope it works, but "Black Boy" does not represent the average life of the Negro child in America.

On nearly every corner on our neighborhood there was a tavern. As a child I remember "drunks" staggering, heard their vile language, never saw a single one of the places or at the open had develop

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condemns a white man for spreading race hatred a  
100-157464-22

# NEGROES JOIN PICKET

## Hawkins, Rev. Russell Called 'UnAmerican'; Huey Long Praised

Colored men and women formed part of a tense picket line outside of Philharmonic auditorium Monday night, demonstrating against the use of the hall by Gerald L. K. Smith, leader of the America First movement.

Despite the picket line, however, and despite numerous protests to the management from prominent individuals and organizations, Smith was permitted to speak and to make unsubstantial, fascist charges before an audience of 3,000.

### ROOSEVELT DENOUNCED

The America Firsters declared that Rev. Clayton D. Russell, pastor of the Peoples Independent Church of Christ, is guilty of un-American activities. The same charge was leveled against August F. Hawkins, Los Angeles Assemblyman, co-author of the California Fair Employment Practices Committee, and against Herbert Sorrell, actor.

The late President Roosevelt, Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace, Charles Chaplin and Langston Hughes were among those also denounced by Smith.

Roosevelt was accused of wanting to be president of the world. Wallace was asked why he didn't run for vice-president under Joe Stalin, and Charles Chaplin was cited as the heaviest contributor to the Communist party in 1922.

### DEPORT CHAPLIN

Smith recommended that Chaplin be deported, and this suggestion was greeted with loud applause by the audience.

Langston Hughes, well-known poet, was declared to be the type of person who should not be allowed to appear on a college campus.

Smith, in speaking of his past, openly boasted of his association

(Continued on Page Two)

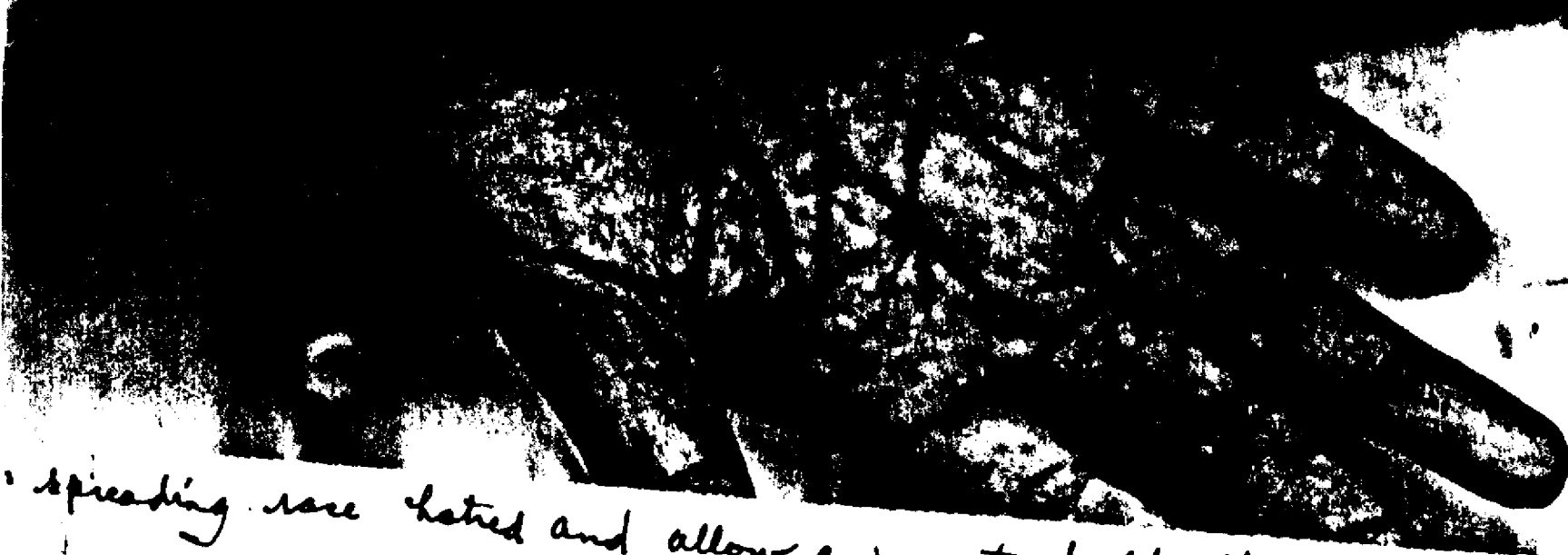
## NAACP Seeks Free P

Urgent requests were especially appointed to the Citizens' Emergency meeting Monday night, es, fraternal and civic send telegrams to Secretary Stimson; Truman Gibson to the secretary members of the California and senate demanding date release of Lieuts. Shirley Clinton and Thompson, now under rest at Goodman Field Ky.

The officers were their refusal to part Jim crew move to officers from the p club. Thompson and are Los Angeles boys known throughout U

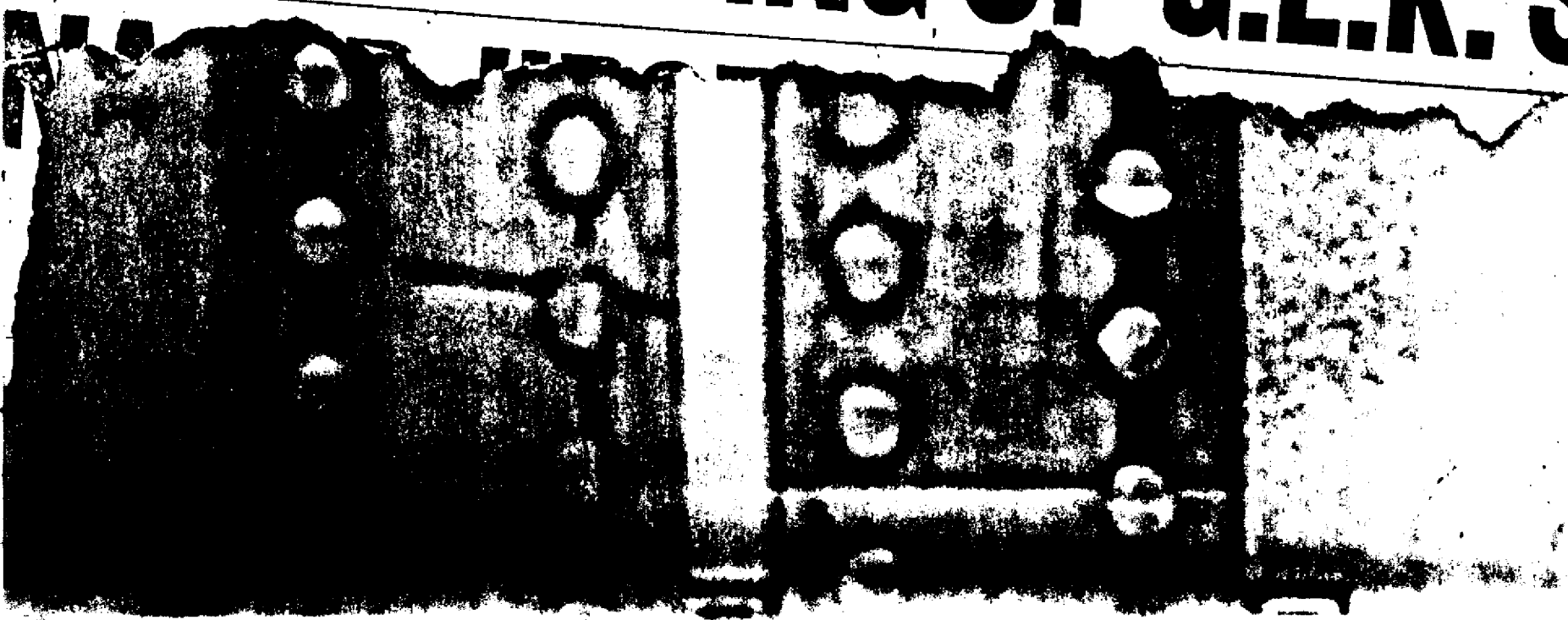
Atty. Thomas L. G. SEXTON, that the the War Department Col. Selway, the trouf affair, appeared to be that the War Depa: sious of the serious ation.

## Grandier Not



spreading race hatred and allow a negro to do it. this white man is wrong and so is  
Richard Wright

**JOIN PICKETING OF G.L.K. SMI**



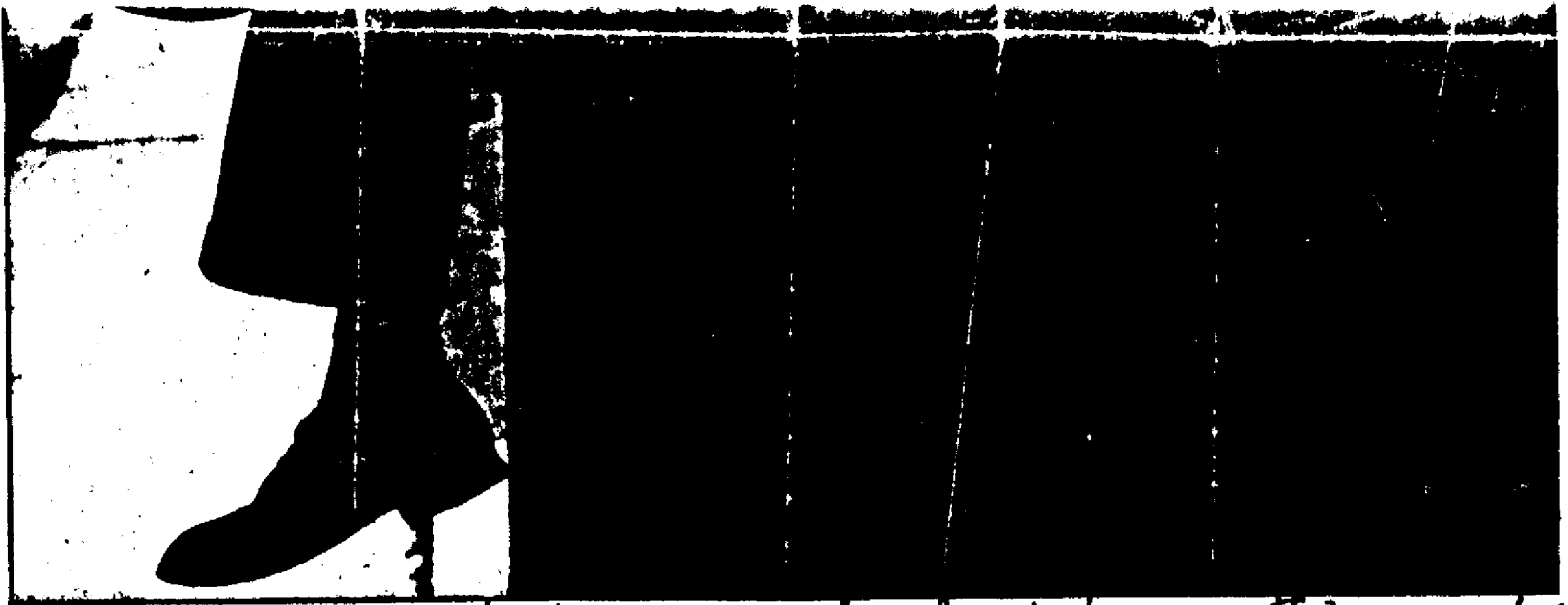
**Black Boy** CONTINUED





At the age of 6, Richard Wright became a drunkard.





Please have a nut doctor examin his head because this man is crazy

# Black Boy Nazi

## A Negro writes a bitter autobiography

*this story is a lie this man is a trouble maker.*

Photographs for LIFE by GEORGE KARGER

**B**lack Boy is the autobiography of the youth of a 37-year-old Negro named Richard Wright who, in 1940, wrote *Native Son*. That novel, which placed Wright among America's most gifted writers, was a bitter, fictional account of a Negro's revolt against the life imposed on a Negro in the North. *Black Boy* (Harper, \$2.50) is a bitter, true story of a Negro boy's struggles against the life imposed on his race in the South.

Richard Wright was born on a Mississippi plantation and reared by a fanatically religious grandmother. Some of the

things that happened to him could have happened to many boys brought up in dire poverty anywhere. But Richard was more sensitive and articulate than most. He was also black and brought up in the South. This is what makes *Black Boy* not only a brilliant autobiography but a powerful indictment of a caste system which is one of America's biggest problems.

On the following pages LIFE presents a picture-dramatization of Richard Wright's *Black Boy*. None of the actors in LIFE's story has any connection with incidents in the book.

*If you people dont want hell to start popping you had better stop this niggers lying tong. the South have its faults it need to be changed but this trash can not change it.*

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

87

100-15244-22



RECORDED

EX-40

EOD

100-157464-22

Mr. James M. McInerney

Acting Head, Criminal Division

John Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

July 20, 1945

RICHARD WRIGHT

Attached for your information is a copy of a letter dated July 4, 1945, together with photostatic copies of enclosures, received from [redacted] care of General Delivery, Los Angeles, California. This letter has been acknowledged.

Enclosures

b7c

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BJA/bca

JUL 20 4 43 PM '45  
RECEIVED  
READING ROOM  
F. B. I.  
DEPT. OF JUSTICE

RECEIVED  
F. B. I.  
JUL 21 1945

*Subj. of [unclear]*

Mr. Tolson  
Mr. E. A. Tamm  
Mr. Clegg  
Mr. Glavin  
Mr. Ladd  
Mr. Nichols  
Mr. Rosen  
Mr. Tracy  
Mr. Carson  
Mr. Egan  
Mr. Gurnea  
Mr. Hendon  
Mr. Pennington  
Mr. Quinn  
Mr. Nease  
Miss Gandy

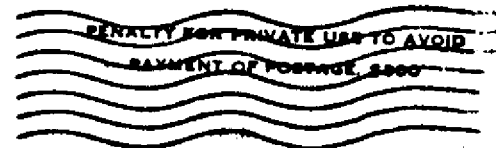
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

MAILED 15

☆ JUL 21 1945 P.M.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS



AUG 7

b7C

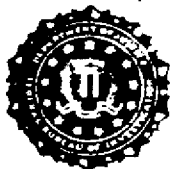
[REDACTED]  
c/o General Delivery  
Los Angeles, California

UNCLAIMED

RETURN  
TO WRITER  
UNCLAIMED



JOHN EDGAR HOOVER  
DIRECTOR



Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

July 20, 1945

**[REDACTED]**  
c/o General Delivery  
Los Angeles, California

Dear Sir:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter dated July 4, 1945 with enclosures.

The material which you have submitted has been carefully noted, and I want to thank you for your interest and courtesy in writing to this Bureau.

In the event you receive additional information which you believe to be of interest to the FBI, I want you to feel free to communicate with the Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Department of Justice, 900 Security Building, Los Angeles 13, California.

Very truly yours,

*J. Edgar Hoover*  
John Edgar Hoover  
Director



58 AUG 20 1945

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/buf

259

100-157464-22

File-5-RE

*Trace list  
indicated in  
[illegible]*

*b7C  
HWC.  
Returned unclaimed  
[illegible]*

RECORDED EOD  
100-157464-22

EX-40

July 20, 1945

D76

c/o General Delivery  
Los Angeles, California

Dear Sir:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter dated July 4, 1945,  
with enclosures.

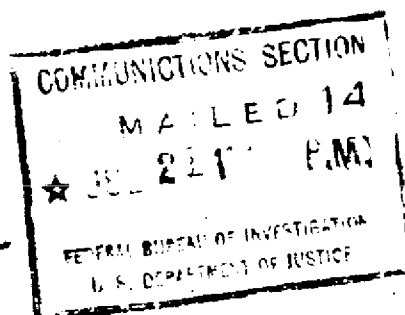
The material which you have submitted has been carefully noted, and  
I want to thank you for your interest and courtesy in writing to this Bureau.

In the event you receive additional information which you believe  
to be of interest to the FBI, I want you to feel free to communicate with  
the Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States  
Department of Justice, 900 Security Building, Los Angeles 13, California.

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover  
Director

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-81 BY SPK BTX/bm



Tolson  
E. A. Tamm  
Clegg  
Glavin  
Ladd  
Nichols  
Rosen  
Tracy  
Harbo  
Mohr  
Tele. Rm.  
Holloman  
Gandy

50 JUL 28 1945

RECEIVED  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
JUL 20 4 45 PM '45



100-157464  
mer

674

Mr. James M. McInerney  
Acting Head, Criminal Division

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

July 6, 1945

John Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

RICHARD WRIGHT

Attached for your information is a copy of a letter dated  
June 18, 1945, received from [REDACTED]  
Los Angeles, California.

This matter is being referred to you as a matter of  
possible interest.

b7c

CC: Assistant Attorney General Herbert Wechsler, War Division

Enclosure

RECORDED

EX-62

100-157464-23  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
JUL 11 1945  
U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE

Mr. Tolson  
Mr. E. A. Tamm  
Mr. Clegg  
Mr. Coffey  
Mr. Glavin  
Mr. Ladd  
Mr. Nichols  
Mr. Rosen  
Mr. Tracy  
Mr. Carson  
Mr. Egan  
Mr. Hendon  
Mr. Pennington  
Mr. Quinn Tamm  
Mr. Nease  
Miss Gandy

DECLASSIFIED BY SP8 BTB/6  
ON 8-25-81

Lat 8/17/45

b7c

70 JUL 1945 234

DALLAS, TEXAS

4436 Hall Street,  
September 27, 1945

Mr. J. Edgar Hoover,  
Federal Bureau of Investigation,  
Washington, D. C.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 1-25-81 BY SP-8/ha

Dear Sir:

I have looked over the book "Black Boy", supposedly written by a negro called Richard Wright, and published by Harper & Brothers, New York City, and I consider this book to be very racially inflammatory.

The publicity given to this book during the last few months is scarcely less than amazing. A while back (I do not know the exact issue, but believe was during June, July or early August) the book "Black Boy" was publicized, with vivid picturization, in "Life" Magazine; and in September 29th issue of "Liberty" Magazine, there was a condensation of the book--with special mention on the front cover of the magazine.

By strange irony, this issue of "Liberty" which contained the condensation of the racially inflammatory book "Black Boy"---displayed on the front cover of the magazine the picture of a returning United States soldier greeting, with salute, the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor.

Granting that the negro called Richard Wright actually wrote the book, it is my opinion that all the publicity given to the book is being financed--either by some person or organization--for propaganda purposes: to fan the flame of dissension and seditious discontent. How Hitler (if he is yet alive) must laugh, and laugh...

I would like to believe that my surmise is incorrect; but the evidence, concerning all the publicity given to this book, uncapably refutes any such wishful thinking. I might also add that the book has been advertised in local newspapers and--I presume--in newspapers of other cities all over the United States. I am remembering that the plan of evil dictators and their indoctrinated brood is--still--to "divide and then conquer."

An offering this suspicion, in case you should deem it advisable to investigate the book and the financing of its extensive publicity--(and the end does not appear in sight).

All loyal Americans, I feel sure, are grateful for all the splendid work done by the F.B.I. in detecting and eradicating crime. With best wishes for the continuation of your most valuable activities, I am

Sincerely,

RECORDED  
& INDEXED  
EX-68

File-5-112  
b7c

b7C

100-157464-24

Assistant Attorney General T. L. Caudle  
Criminal Division

October 4, 1945

John Edgar Hoover, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

RICHARD WRIGHT

b7C

Attached for your information is a copy of a letter dated September 21, 1945, received from [redacted] Dallas, Texas.

This letter is being referred to you as a matter of possible interest.

Enclosure

cc-Assistant Attorney General Herbert Wechsler  
War Division

- Mr. Tolson
- Mr. E. A. Tamm
- Mr. Clegg
- Mr. Coffey
- Mr. Glavin
- Mr. Ladd
- Mr. Nichols
- Mr. Rosen
- Mr. Tracy
- Mr. Carson
- Mr. Egan
- Mr. Gurnea
- Mr. Hendon
- Mr. Pennington
- Mr. Quinn Tamm
- Mr. Nease
- Miss Gandy

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-8 BY SP1 BTJ/ht/tj

Pl  
D. J.

56007 3/7 1043357

100-15716H-24

October 4, 1945

01487

RECORDED

EX-68

Dallas, Texas

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-8 BY SP1 BTJ/ha

b7c

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter dated  
September 27, 1945.

The content of your letter has been carefully noted, and I  
want you to know that your interest and courtesy in writing to this  
Bureau are very much appreciated. Also I want to thank you for the  
complimentary remarks concerning the work of this Bureau.

In the event you receive additional information which you  
believe to be of interest to the FBI, I want you to feel free to  
communicate with me or the Special Agent in Charge of our Dallas  
Field Division located at 1318 Mercantile Bank Building, Dallas, Texas.

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover  
Director

Mr. Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. E. A. Tamm \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Coffey \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Glavin \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Ladd \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Tracy \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Carson \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Egan \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Gurnea \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Harbo \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Hendon \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Pennington \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Quinn Tamm \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Nease \_\_\_\_\_  
Miss Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

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1945

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Bjorn

## Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI

DATE: June 18, 1946

FROM : SAC, New York

SUBJECT: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT;  
SECURITY MATTER - C

Reference is made to the report of Special Agent [redacted] New York, June 18, 1946, wherein it was set forth that the subject is presently in France where he intends to remain until September, 1946.

In view of this fact, instant case is being reopened and placed in a pending inactive status in order that the subject's residence and activities may be checked upon his return to the United States.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTG/bca

100-157464-25  
FBI  
30 JUN 20 1946

VHG  
100-41674  
JUN 28 1946

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION.

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

NEW YORK

NY FILE NO. 100-41674

VH

REPORT MADE AT <b>NEW YORK</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>6/18/46</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>6/5, 12, 14/46</b>	REPORT MADE BY <b>[REDACTED] b7c</b>
TITLE <b>RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT</b>			CHARACTER OF CASE <b>SECURITY MATTER - C</b>

**SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:**

Subject, negro, resides 82 Washington Place, NYC. Free lance writer, presently working on novel. Left U.S. for France, May 1946, with return set for Sept. 1946. Reason for trip unknown. Borep't 9/4/08, Natchez, Miss. Broke with CP due to failure to recognize and deal with problems in society.

*yes*  
*Rec'd date noted on 5/1 card 7-1-46*

AGENCY *100-41674*  
REQ. REC'D *7-1-46*  
REP'T FORM *7-1-46*  
BY *[REDACTED]*

- P\* -

**REFERENCE:**

Bureau File 100-157464  
Letters to Bureau, 2/26/45 and 4/17/45  
Bureau letter to SACs, #28, 1946 Series, 3/12/46  
Bureau letter, 5/7/45

**DETAILS:**

The records of Selective Service Board #178, 44 Court Street, Brooklyn, New York, reflected that as of March 21, 1946, the subject's address was apartment 3F, 82 Washington Place, New York City, where he resided with his wife. This file also contained a letter dated April 14, 1946, wherein WRIGHT advised he planned to leave the United States on May 1, 1946, for a period of three months in France. The reason for this trip was not given in his letter.

☐ A pretext telephone call was made [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] it was ascertained that the last book the subject wrote was "Black Boy". At the present time he is writing a novel, but the completion date was unknown. It was learned that the subject had left the United States for France around May 1, 1946, and it was believed he would return to this country in September of this year. The reason for the subject's trip was not

APPROVED AND FORWARDED: <i>[Signature]</i>	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES	
COPIES OF THIS REPORT 5 Bureau 3 New York <i>CCPR</i> <i>11-18-46</i> <i>COPY IN FILE</i>		100-157464-26 30 JUN 1946 ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED DATE 8-25-81 BY 6080 BTJ/bc	RECORDED 1



NY 100-41674

mentioned [REDACTED] b7c

As previously reported, the records of Selective Service Board #178, reflected that the subject is negro, and was born September 4, 1908, at Natchez, Mississippi.

A review of the file of the subject reflected that he is a negro writer, who previously wrote for "New Masses" and "Daily Worker". In addition, he had published five novels concerning the fight of the colored people, besides writing skits and stories in a similar vein. He wrote two articles for "Atlantic Monthly" for August and September, 1944, entitled "I Tried To Be A Communist". The theme of these articles appeared to be that he broke with the Party because they were unable to recognize him as a friend. The articles did not seem to attack the Communist Party as revolutionary, but attacked it because of the failure of individuals in the Party to properly recognize and deal with problems in society.

The indices of the New York Field Division reflected no further information concerning the subject.

- PENDING -

NY 100-41674

UNDEVELOPED LEAD

NEW YORK

At New York City, N. Y.

Will verify subject's residence and ascertain his activities upon his return to the United States from France, presumably in September, 1946. If possible, secure the subject's reason for his trip to France.

9  
SAC, New York

Director, FBI

September 5, 1946

RICHARD W. WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER - C

Your office is instructed to follow the activities of the instant subject in the Communist field closely upon his return from France. Continuing investigation, every effort should be made to obtain admissible evidence tending to prove the subject's membership in, or affiliation with, the Communist Party. In the event you are unable to develop such evidence, further consideration should be given the advisability of cancelling the Security Index Card on this individual.

100-187464

rb

b7c

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-81 BY SPK/BTJ/bee

RECEIVED SECTION  
MAILED 9  
SEP 5 1946 P.M.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Tolson	
E. A. Tamm	
Clegg	
Glavin	
Ladd	
Nichols	
Rosen	
Tracy	
Carson	
Coffey	
Harbo	
Hendon	
Quinn Tamm	
Nease	
Gandy	

RECORDED

100-1-1464-29  
FBI  
51 SEP 8 1946

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI  
FROM : *ES* SAC, New York  
SUBJECT: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER - C  
Bureau file 100-157464

DATE: February 19, 1947

Reference is made to Bureau letter dated September 5, 1946 and to the report of Special Agent [REDACTED] dated June 18, 1946 at New York in the above entitled case.

RICHARD WRIGHT left the United States for France in May 1946 and at the present time, it is not known when he intends to return to this country. In the February 1, 1947 edition of "THE NEW LEADER", an anti-Communist publication of the Social Democrats, appears an article entitled, "AN INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD WRIGHT". This is a translation of an article under the same title that appeared recently in "DIE WELTWACHE", a weekly journal published in Zurich, Switzerland. WRIGHT was interviewed at Zurich concerning Negro problems and expressed his resentment of racial discrimination in the United States.

Inasmuch as no information has been developed indicating Communist activity on the part of WRIGHT since he severed connections with the Communist Party and further in view of the fact that he may not return to the United States for some time, this case is being closed unless the Bureau otherwise directs.

In view of the subject's past activities, it is believed that the security index card in this case should not be cancelled.

YD  
100-41674

RECORDED  
& INDEXED

100-157464-28  
31 FEB 21 1947

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-81 BY [signature]

1947

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI

DATE: January 19, 1948

FROM : SAC, New York

SUBJECT: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT;  
SECURITY MATTER - C  
(Bureau file 100-157464)

*Cancel*  
**b2**  
**b7D**

A review of instant file reflects that since subject's severance of his connections with the Communist Party, and his public criticism of its policies during 1944, he has not engaged in any Communist activities; that, in fact, according to information submitted by [REDACTED] subject was definitely not of a Marxist frame of mind as indicated by certain critical comments he made concerning conditions within the Party.

In view of the foregoing circumstances Bureau authority is requested at this time for the cancellation of the security index card maintained on subject by the New York Office.

*Cancelled*  
*1-31-48*  
*lml*

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/bce

mbm  
100-41674

RECORDED 1-21-48  
INDEXED 22 JAN 21 1948  
EX-119  
*[Signature]*

SAC,

Director, FBI  
New York

February 3, 1948

RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT;  
SECURITY MATTER - C  
Your File 100-41674

In accordance with your recommendation, the Security Index Card relative to the captioned individual has been cancelled and you are authorized to place your copy thereof in the investigative case file.

RECORDED

100-157484 - 29

low

and

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP1 BJA/bce

67C

Mr. Tolson  
Mr. E. A. Tamm  
Mr. Clegg  
Mr. Glavin  
Mr. Ladd  
Mr. Nichols  
Mr. Rosen  
Mr. Tracy  
Mr. Egan  
Mr. Gurnea  
Mr. Harbo  
Mr. Mohr  
Mr. Pennington  
Mr. Quinn Tamm  
Mr. Nease  
Miss Gandy

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

MAILED 11

★ FEB 3 1948 P.M.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

54  
71 FEB 5 - 1948

IF STATE  
INFORMATION

DATE 6-13-80

The Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

FROM:

NAME OF PERSON OR FIRM

WRIGHT, Richard

DATE OF BIRTH

9-4-08

PLACE OF BIRTH

Netherlands  
Miss

RACE

SEX

OCCUPATION

Author

EMPLOYER

NAT. CERT. NO.

MARITAL STATUS

ALIASES AND NICKNAMES

ADDRESS

TYPE OF INFORMATION DESIRED

☐ All information

☐ Derogatory

CITIZENSHIP STATUS

NAME OF ORGANIZATION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS

REPLY

☐ Material attached

☐ No record

☐ No derogatory information

☐ Other

OSTENSIBLE PURPOSE

NAMES OF LEADERS OR SPONSORS OR AFFILIATED ORGANIZATION

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ANNUAL REPORT

1-1-43 at NY

5-28-43 at NY

6-9-44 at NY

7-8-44 at NY

9-5-44 at NY

6-18-46 at NY

100-157464-

100-157464

DATE

CHECKED BY



XXXXXX  
XXXXXX  
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET10

Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☐ Deleted under exemption(s) \_\_\_\_\_ with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☒ Document(s) originating with the following government agency(ies) Central Intelligence Agency, was/were forwarded to them for direct response to you.

\_\_\_\_\_ Page(s) referred for consultation to the following government agency(ies); \_\_\_\_\_ as the information originated with them. You will be advised of availability upon return of the material to the FBI.

\_\_\_\_\_ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

☐ For your information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- ☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:

100-157464-30

XXXXXX  
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XXXXXX
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
 X DELETED PAGE(S) X  
 X NO DUPLICATION FEE X  
 X FOR THIS PAGE X  
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



United States Department of Justice  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Washington, D. C.



IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER TO

FILE NO.

Liaison Office  
Heidelberg, Germany

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Date: January 8, 1952

~~SECRET~~ - ARMY COURIER

To: John Edgar Hoover, Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

From: George A. VanNoy

Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT;  
[REDACTED]

SECURITY MATTER - C

Attached for the Bureau's information and for the information of the Legal Attache, Paris, France are two copies of a report dated December 4, 1951, prepared by Region IX, 66th CIC Detachment which sets out information furnished by [REDACTED]

b7D per Army

Encls.  
cc - Paris (encl.)

CLASS. & EXT. BY... SP8 BTJ/bce  
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2  
DATE OF REVIEW... 8-25-91

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP OF CLASS  
DATE 10-21-81

RECORDED - 96

INDEXED - 96

SE 39

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

4 December 1951

Region IX, 66th CIC Detachment, APO SF US Army

File: IX-F-489

On the 29 November 1951, [REDACTED]

made in substance the following statement:

[REDACTED] is a member of the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) and several other musical composer groups which [REDACTED] mentioned in the course of conversation. [REDACTED] stated that, at the time when he first planned his trip abroad, the groups had been very cooperative in aiding him and had promised an advance payment on royalties to tide over SOURCE until the next period of royalty payments. (SOURCE stated that the arrangement is for the composers to put all collection of royalties into the hands of the musicians groups and then these groups pay monthly allotments to the composers; these allotments are dependent upon the payment of royalties for arrangements by the composers but a deposit is retained and a fund built up to assure payments over a period of years when the music composer is no longer popular.) Suddenly, on the day prior to the departure date of SOURCE, the promised check was received but was neither the amount promised nor requested by SOURCE. SOURCE stated that he tried to find out why there had been a sudden change in the attitude of the group; he was told that the music groups saw no reason why he should come over-seas, and there had been a hesitancy to allot money to him to be used for a trip at the time. SOURCE suspected that such was due to the fact that he had complained to the "White House" in a personal letter about some subversive activities of the groups to which he belonged. SOURCE stated that it had seemed to him that Lou NEVY, husband of one of the Andrew Sisters, had made a great effort to "push" some composers who were Russian and others who were very pro-Communist. SOURCE is of the opinion that funds paid to Russian composers as such was every good cover to transfer dollar credits to the Soviet government; he further said that he had written a letter to the White House calling attention to the preferential treatment given to these pro-Communist members of the composers. A lot more of the same tenor followed.

670  
per  
Army

Then SOURCE stated that after reaching France he had used the American Express as a mailing address. Furthermore, he had asked one (1) of the French girls who worked at the American Express to give personal attention to his mail so that it would be forwarded to him on a planned trip to Rome. [REDACTED] arrived in France in June, went to England in August, and had been in Paris continuously since September. [REDACTED] stated that he had arranged to meet the girl and to make a financial arrangement with her on Monday, 26 November 1951; however, on Friday or Saturday, 23 or 24 Nov 51, Richard WRIGHT had held a

(continued)

4 - Hqs., EUCON COM 2  
2 - CIC Central Registry

1 - CIC Central File  
1 - Region IX File

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

100-157464-7

100-157464-3/enclosure

ON JAN 16, 1952  
BY CDT U.S. ARMY  
RECEIVED UNCLASSIFIED  
Auth Para 1-4.3 Doc 5200. 1-4

SOI dtd 4 Dec 51; Reg IX, 66th CIC Det;

SUBJ: [REDACTED]

meeting of a fellowship organization of American and French artists, writers, theatrical people, and others at the house of [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] attended the meeting at the invitation of CLIFFORD and there saw the French woman employee of the American Express. She told SOURCE that the meeting was a communist front and that she did not belong but had only come out of deference to [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] stated that he had observed the meeting and the tenor of the conversation which had been generally critical of the American policies, racial and foreign. SOURCE expressed the opinion that WRIGHT, who has publicly avowed Communist leanings, is as much a communist as he ever had been. [REDACTED] stated that the French girl came to him early on Monday morning, 26 Nov 51, and stated that it would be impossible for her to keep the planned appointment with SOURCE as "something" had come up. [REDACTED] stated that one of the persons at the meeting had probably told the girl to avoid him because of the fact that he is considered a "stool-pigeon" for anti-subversive persons. [REDACTED] did not know who this could have been but suspected that Richard WRIGHT would have been in an ideal position to do this as WRIGHT was a friend of Paul ROBISON and Mrs. ROBISON and at one time Mrs. ROBISON had asked [REDACTED] to help in getting a script sold at the Warner Brothers Studio. SOURCE had taken the script in and offered it to the Warner script department but had been told that "he should stick to writing music and let the Red element alone."

[REDACTED] stated that WRIGHT had made a picture in South America early this year and since has lost a lot of money promoting a dance group. WRIGHT had asked [REDACTED] to write more music for a new show which WRIGHT wanted to do in order to recoup his fortune. [REDACTED] was of the opinion that WRIGHT, who has kept his US citizenship and lives off book royalties from American sales, does not receive the whole-hearted cooperation of the French or Americans who are renouncing their US citizenship and working in France. SOURCE is of the opinion that the same persons who attempted to block his trip abroad have warned the subversive elements in Paris to watch SOURCE'S personal contacts and keep him from gathering any information which would reveal their activities. Among the discoveries which SOURCE made was that his music was being played in France and that the French agencies had been paying royalties to the American Society of Composers for twenty (20) years in his account. [REDACTED] explained that his trip to England was to spend the royalties which could not be taken from that country (in excess of twenty-eight (28) pounds sterling).

AGENTS NOTES:

P-6

(continued)

4 - Hqs., EUCOM COM 2  
1 - CIC Central Registry

1 - CIC Central File  
1 - Region IX File

SECURITY INFORMATION

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

b7D  
per  
Army

ON JAN 16 1952  
BY CCB-DIAINSON/FOIPO

SOI dtd 4 Dec 51; Reg II, 66th CIC Det;

SUBJ: [REDACTED]

Member of the [REDACTED] receives mail in care of the American Express Company, Paris as he had moved several times, largely because he has not paid his rent; he gave the explanation that checks were sent to him from the US on schedule but time periods exceeded amount of cash on hand so that SOURCE was forced to move often; Afterwards he would catch up on the bills when his checks arrived.

2. SOURCE seemed sincere and sounded much more coherent than the written report seems to indicate. SOURCE volunteered the information, explaining that he was seeking money or any remuneration but wanted to do his patriotic duty. One thing seemed strange — that was the anti-Semitic tone of his statements. SOURCE referred to Col. MCCORMICK as a "great American" and expressed approval of the editorial policies of that section of the American press. SOURCE seemed to be well versed in the attachment of various persons to Communist groups and promised that any proof of the statements or suspicions which he could obtain would be gladly given to Military Intelligence.

b7D  
per  
Army

3. Department of Veterans Affairs, US Embassy, Paris, verified that there is a record of one [REDACTED] and record will be searched for information.

4. It is possible that SOURCE may have a "mental quirk" which would account for the attempt of the Society of Composers to keep him in America. Yet a word to the Passport section would have accomplished this. Intriguing matter and the information given reference 489 ties in with the original information.

4 - Hqs., EUCOM COM 2  
2 - CIC Central Registry

1 - CIC Central File  
1 - Region II File

REGRADEN UNCLASSIFIED  
ON JAN 16 1988  
BY CDR USN JCOM FOIPO  
Auth Para 1-603 DoD 5200.1-R

SECURITY INFORMATION

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

SAC, New York (100-41674)

February 19, 1952

Director, FBI (100-157464) - 3/

RECORDED-39

RICHARD WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER - C

Transmitted herewith is a copy of a letter dated  
January 8, 1952, with enclosures, from the Bureau's Liaison  
Office, Heidelberg, Germany. **b7c**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

This is for your information.

Enclosure

ald

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-81 BY 8886 J/ku

RECEIVED - NEW YORK

FEB 16 5 34 PM '52

MAILED 4  
FEB 19 1952  
COMM - FBI

Tele. Room \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Ladd \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Belmont \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Glavin \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Harbo \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Tracy \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
Tele. Rm. \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Nease \_\_\_\_\_  
Miss Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

247

**b7c**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



United States Department of Justice  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Washington, D. C.

Liaison Office  
Heidelberg, Germany

**CONFIDENTIAL**

IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER TO  
FILE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Date: February 4, 1952

~~SECRET~~ - ARMY COURIER

To: Director, FBI

From: [REDACTED]

Subject: FRANCO-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP GROUP  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

Attached for the Bureau's information is one copy of a Region IX 66th CIC Detachment report dated January 3, 1952 regarding the above captioned group. Also attached is one copy of a report dated January 3, 1952, also prepared by Region IX, regarding RICHARD D. WRIGHT organizer of the captioned group. One copy of each of these reports is being furnished to the LEGAT, Paris, France with a copy of this letter. (U)

No further action is contemplated in this matter by CIC but any additional information which may be received will be forwarded.

cc - Paris (Encl-2) VIA AIR POUCH  
Encl. -2

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE

RECORDED - 159

MAR 13 1952

INDEXED - 159

SE 47

**CONFIDENTIAL**

CLASS. & EXT. BY  
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2  
DATE OF REVIEW

1952

100-157464-

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) OF  
DATE 10-21-87

100-114  
3-11-52

159

8-25-81

b7c



3 January 1952

Region II, 66th CIC Detachment, APO SF, US Army XI-7-511

**FRANCO-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP GROUP**

On 21 December 1951, the following information concerning SUBJECT was given:

The FRANCO-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP OR UP was organized almost entirely by Richard WRIGHT, American writer, 21 Boulevard Le Prince, PARIS, France, immediately after the war (WW II), and was supposed to be a sponsorship for young writers, artists and poets who were students in France. WRIGHT, whose works are widely read in France and have been translated into most European languages, was supposed to be the "Patron of Art" and arrange courses and affairs that were to be international in character to effect the interjection of the Americans and their French counterparts. At the inception of the group, WRIGHT and the management of the lines (lines of action, 21 "Tate" "Tate", 21 "Tate") were very friendly and many of the youngsters, particularly the music crowd, came to these lines. WRIGHT met many of the youngsters and invited them to the affairs that the FRANCO-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP OR UP sponsored, such as dances, parties, meetings, and occasional parties. Even at that time, several of the students made statements to the effect that the group was "leftist" in the nature of its discussions and that the members were defended the French and American concept of democracy were not given the same hearings as the "Christianists" and "left" partisans. Many of the social affairs were failures and later (especially in the last year) most of the American students, the "Tahiti Group" (identified as Americans who are tourists and RCA, Marshall Plan employees and military (military) members) have completely avoided the WRIGHT group as one that is more "left" than not. The principal members of the FRANCO-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP OR UP have been identified as Richard WRIGHT, Jay Livingston, retired American Customs official, and about 7, 27 Rue Clichy, PARIS, France; (son) W. P. American Express employee, Robert W. American Express Company; and Jean-Paul Sartre, founder of the "Existentialist" Movement. Lately there has been a break between the (the lines of action) and the WRIGHT group because WRIGHT tested them (the lines of action group) for his movie "Native Son", which was made in South American and then did not employ any of them in the picture. WRIGHT and his group have been the targets of attacks from one JACQUES ALBERT, young negro writer who is a student in PARIS, having come over on a scholarship given by the American Publishing Company. ALBERT attacks the hatred themes of the WRIGHT writings and the attempt of the FRANCO-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP OR UP to permeate "Uncle Tom's literature" when the day has come for a more "realistic and analytical" approach to the American Negro Problem.

On 20 December 1951, [redacted] Tourist from U. S., New York, now living at Hotel Crystal, 25 Rue St. Louis, PARIS, France, volunteered the following information in substance: (continued)

4 - HQ. WFOC. CO. 2  
2 - CIC Control Reg.

2 - CIC Control File  
2 - Reg. XI File

100-157464-32

2200

100-157464-32

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED

ON JAN 6, 1978

BY CDR USAF/SCM FORA

Auth Para 1-603 DoD 5200.1-R

(S-6) 67D per Army

SECURITY INFORMATION

3 January 1952

Region II, 66th CIC Detachment, APO SF, HI 96341

FRANCO-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP  
OF SF

A niece of FRANK is an art student in the Commercial Art School of the City University of Paris and has been in PARIS since February 1951. When the niece first came to PARIS, she was invited to join the FRANCO-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP GROUP by Richard WRIGHT, who stated that the group was composed of "militant persons" interested in the welfare of the American Negro. WRIGHT stressed that the group was not a Communist organization, but solely a "militant group". FRANK's niece attended one meeting and came to the conclusion, from the chatter of the uncontrolled meeting, that it was chaotic rather than militant and, despite the denial of Communist label, was a group that certainly espoused the Communist line as the girl had heard it in the United States. WRIGHT stated that her niece had not returned to any of the meetings and that she (WRIGHT) was not anxious to meet Richard WRIGHT.

(P-6)

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED  
ON JAN 6 1988  
BY CDR USAHNSCOM FOIPO  
Auth Para 1-403 DoD 5200.1-R

1 - No. EX-7 CO. 2  
2 - EIC Central Sec  
3 - EIC Central File  
4 - EIC Central File  
5 - EIC Central File  
6 - EIC Central File  
7 - EIC Central File  
8 - EIC Central File  
9 - EIC Central File  
10 - EIC Central File

3 January 1952

Section 11, 6411 51st Interchange, A.C. St, St Any

**23-7-512**

WIGG, Richard D.

On 27 October 1951, the following article appeared in the "Tram-Times",  
"The L.T.C. has its 10th FIVE 50,000 francs for the widow of L.T.C.", the  
news (the war) and finally ended."

The Nobel Peace Winner of the Peace Award for 1950, Ralph B. Abner, Director of the Department of the UN Director, was received by the International League Against Racial Discrimination and Anti-Semitism yesterday evening at the Royal Palace. In the presence of King Leopold III, Richard of Belgium, the Duke of Brabant, Paul-Henri, Prince of Liège, Prince of Monaco, etc., he was given some 25,000 francs, collected by the I.L.A.S. for the widow and the children of J. Edgar Hoover (USA), the negro American recently executed for having "raped" a white woman.

The following is an item that appeared in the "International Daily Mail" on 12 December 1971: "Jean-Paul Sartre, Victor Segalen, Albert Camus, Marcel Merleau-Ponty, amongst many others, at a conference party to be held in Paris on 12th Dec. to initiate the New Story - International Journal for Left-Wing Writers."

In the envelope containing the invitation was another envelope, from which I extracted a card (for return) inscribed: "I shall (small) not be able to attend the New Story Party.....concerning the donation of the 2,500 francs per person, I, which is enclosed to include..... friends."

The "concerning the donation" seemed rather odd to me. The idea, I suppose, is to attract noted patrons of the arts. I can't imagine any struggling young writer painting or writing, thinking, attending, or disattending... (in?)

On Sunday, 15 December 1951, a cocktail party was held and the following is a translation of the report of the party according to "Comlat", identified as a newspaper for "Intellectuals and Facilitators", dated 17 December 1951. "FOR A FREE SOUTHERN CHINA WHICH BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE OF CHINA"

At the Center for International Relations, near Chambray-sur-Garonne, a number of French and American persons responded to the invitation of the "New Story", an American literary magazine, which has just published a French edition.

St. Louis/1937, without headline/1937, was photographed w/ U. S. Secret  
 & fellow in which Katherine Tegen for a clearing name.

The structure was very French style (the St. Germain is type of New  
(continued)

44 - Mr. Wirtz, CC 2  
2 - Mr. Contro, Rep

1 - CTR Central File  
2 - E-9 NY File

100-157464-3

REFRACUT UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 6, 1988

CDR USAINSDOMFOR

3 January 1952

Series II, 644 CIC Detachment, 470 St. W. Army, II-7-512

SMITH, Richard D.

Work) with cocktails, literary conversation and jazz, just like a novel by ERNEST HEMINGWAY.

The magazine "NUEVE", which includes among the Board of Directors such illustrious persons as Jean-Paul Sartre, Richard Wright, William Faulkner, Tennessee Williams, Stuart Gillett, etc., is a magazine devoted to "young writers" and more over 35 will be accepted as a contributor.

Under the auspices of the magazine, a jury composed of Jean-Paul Sartre, Richard Wright, Stuart Gillett, and Lucille Kroll, celebrated American literary critic, will award the prize in July to the best published work of an American or French writer. The very attractive prize will be a month's trip to Paris or New York, depending on the nationality of the winner.

(b-2)

On 12 December 1951, [redacted] stated that a colored man named (SNU)/[redacted] stated to [redacted] that one (SNU) [redacted], employed by the American Express Company was carrying out Communist literature at the American Express Company and had been seen giving this literature to military personnel. [redacted] had identified [redacted] as a member of the Communist Group of artists and writers that Richard Wright has organized in Paris. A man named [redacted], receptionist for Mr. (SNU)/[redacted], Vice-President of the American Express, has been used by these people to lure [redacted] in France on a "faked passport".

(T-6)

On 12 December 1951, [redacted] made the following statement in substance:  
Richard Wright is active in the Communist Party in France and has been engaged in some in the Communist doctrine through the Franco-American Fellowship Group. Mr. Richard Wright is the active Communist member of the family and has made a point of "insulting Negro personnel who hold views other than Communist". [redacted] has known Wright since his first appearance in Paris. Wright was invited to France by the French Government at the instigation of the Communist leadership of the Government. Wright organized the Franco-American Fellowship Group and held lectures, meetings, and the like. Among the topics discussed was the "angers of hell street capitalism". Wright asked "if we to join the organization but, inasmuch as [redacted] did not join any group, an invitation was not accepted. However, two men who were working for the Times (Paris Night Club) at the time did join the Franco-American Fellowship Group; namely, Al "Gator" Williams and Al [redacted]. Three men attended the meeting and reported that, as  
(continued)

b7D  
per  
Army

1 - Mr. F.C. [redacted]  
2 - Central [redacted]

1 - CIC Control File  
2 - Mr. [redacted] File

3 January, 1958

Region II, 64th CIC Detachment, APO SF, W. Army 21-5-512

• SUBJECT, Richard D.

As far as they have been able to discover, the group was devoting all of its time to very uncontrolled discussion of the kind of that were wrong with the United States. Some of the members of the group (Protest-American Fellowship Group) presented the fact that they were recognized as Communist Party members. One of the most interesting members, known as a newspaper reporter, was also one of the most interesting members. During the time with a white woman who formerly worked for the American Information Section at Armed Forces Information Station. She stated that this woman had been fired because of Communist Party activities. She stated that she had a great deal of military experience in Germany, is a fact that these people are not exploit. She stated that she was sure to be the next and the most evil Communist in the entire group. She stated that, if one has a lot of military loyalty clearance, it was better to stay away from the group and the Fellowship Group. She stated that she had heard that the State Department in my secret-the call on in for conferences, the fact.

(1-2)

DECLASSIFIED BY 60320  
ON JAN 6 1988  
BY CDR USN/USMC/USAF/USN/USAF  
REF ID: A60320

4 - No. 1000 1000  
2 - C. Central Reg

2 - C. Central File  
2 - Reg. 1000

American Embassy  
2 Avenue Gabriel  
Paris 8, France

~~SECRET~~ - AIR COURIER

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

March 3, 1952

Director, FBI

Legal Attache, Paris

INTERNAL SECURITY - R

CLASS & EXT BY...  
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2  
DATE OF REVIEW...  
88345

Following is a copy of a Confidential Despatch, prepared by Mr. William A. Crawford, Political Section, American Embassy, under date of February 21, 1952; concerning the above subject;

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

67 APR 18 1952

NOT RECORDED  
147 APR 1 1952

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ENCLOSURE

ORIGINAL FILED IN

PROPERTY, FBI

Re: [REDACTED]

INTERNAL SECURITY - R

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
CONFIDENTIAL

46

[REDACTED]

b2  
c

It should be noted that whereas RICHARD WRIGHT continues to maintain an anti-Stalinist position since his expulsion from the CPUSA, he has wittingly or not been serving Communist propaganda ends by frequent contributions to neutralist publications such as L'Observateur and particularly by his insistence on portraying abroad only the seamy side of the race question in the United States. While flirting with Titoism and Sartre-ism, he has maintained a position, so far as the East-West conflict is concerned, tantamount to 'a plague on both your houses.' [REDACTED] with WRIGHT has been close, and although it is possible that their political philosophies are much alike, [REDACTED] background as well as his writings indicate the likelihood of a discreet tie-in with the Stalinist camp itself, which is not the case with WRIGHT. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
CONFIDENTIAL



1 - Ladd  
1 - Mr. Belmont

July 17, 1953

**SECRET**

CLASS. & EXT. BY: SP8 BT/164  
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2, 1-2.4.3  
DATE OF REVIEW: 8-25-91

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) OF class  
DATE 10-21-81

**RICHARD WRIGHT**

9999

bl E/

A review of our files reflects that a security-type investigation was conducted during 1943-1946 on a Richard Nathaniel Wright, who is identical with the captioned individual. Wright was born on September 4, 1908, in Natchez, Mississippi. He claims eight years of elementary school education and professes experience as a novelist, playwright, poet, and newspaper reporter. In 1935 he worked on the Federal Writers Project in Chicago and sold articles and short stories to magazines. In 1937 he worked on the same project in New York City. At that time he also did some work for the "Daily Worker" and became a contributing editor of the "New Masses." Both of these publications have been cited as organs of the Communist Party by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, January 3, 1939.

(100-157464)

On March 21, 1942, Wright's name appeared on the list of the "Committee to Free Earl Browder," which was published in the March 21, 1942, issue of the "People's Voice." The "People's Voice" has been cited by the California Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, 1948, as among the publications found "to be Communist initiated and controlled or so strongly influenced as to be in the Stalin solar system."

bl. b7E

100-157464-8;

100-157464-9)

**SECRET**

RECORDED - 91

INDEXED - 91

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 10-21-81 BY SP8 BT/164

Legal Attache  
London, England  
1 - Foreign Liaison Unit

JUL 21 1953

b7c

b7c

On July 28, 1944, the New York "Herald Tribune" published an article entitled "Negro Article Criticized Reds as Intolerant" in which Wright was reported to have stated that his Communist Party membership roughly covered the period from the latter part of 1932 or early part of 1933 to 1940, and his early association with the Communists in Chicago was broken in 1937 when, he said, he was "ejected" from the Party. Wright stated that he was reinstated in 1937 and maintained a relationship with the Party until 1940. However, Wright's name appeared frequently in the "Daily Worker" during 1941 and 1942. Wright was reported to be a member of the American Committee to Save Refugees as of March 6, 1942, and on September 18, 1942, he was listed as one of the officers of the League of American Writers advocating a second front for Europe. The American Committee to Save Refugees has been cited as a Communist front by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities Report of March 29, 1944, and the League of American Writers has been cited as Communist by the Attorney General.

(C-2; 100-157464-5, 13)

The August, 1944, issue of the "Atlantic Monthly" published an article entitled "I Tried to be a Communist" in which Wright discussed his earliest experiences as a Communist Party member in Chicago and touched upon the problems he faced in trying to present his own ideas to the Party. As a result, considerable publicity was given Wright's articles in the "Daily Worker" newspaper. In his column entitled "New Times," published in the August 6, 1944, issue of the "Daily Worker," Benjamin J. Davis, Jr., referred to Wright and to what he called Wright's "public and wholly unjustifiable attack on the Communists." Davis referred to Wright's claim of withdrawing from the Communists in 1940, and asked why Wright waited until 1944 to make his break public. Davis inquired whom Wright was trying to impress and indicated that Wright's attitude was a form of super-leftism.

Wright was classified as 4-F during World War II because of a severe psycho-neurosis. His interest in the problems of the Negro was almost an obsession.

(100-157464-15)

Wright left the United States for France in May, 1946, and there is no indication in our files reflecting that he has ever returned to the United States.

[REDACTED]

670

67D

~~SECRET~~

[REDACTED]

An individual who lives in Paris, France, advised in December, 1951, that Wright retained his United States citizenship and lived off his book royalties from American sales. He reported that he had attended a meeting which was a "Communist front" and which was generally critical of American policies, racial and foreign. This meeting was attended by Wright and it was the informant's opinion that even though Wright had publicly renounced Communism, he was as much a Communist as he had ever been. (U)

b7D per Army

100-157464-31)

On December 16, 1951, an unidentified source reported that the Franco-American Fellowship Group was organized almost entirely by Richard Wright, American writer, 14 Monsieur Le Prince, Paris, France, immediately after World War II, and was supposed to be a sponsorship for young writers, artists, and poets who were students in France. At the time of its organization several of the students had made statements to the effect that the group was "leftist" in the nature of its discussions. According to the informant, Wright and his group were the targets of attacks from one James Baldwin, a young Negro writer who was a student in Paris. Baldwin attacked the hatred themes of the Wright writings and the attempt of the Franco-American Fellowship Group to perpetuate "Uncle Tom Literature Methods." (U)

(U. S. Army; 100-157464-32)

On December 10, 1951, an American citizen, then living in Paris, advised that her niece, who was a student, had been invited to join the Franco-American Fellowship Group by Richard Wright, who stated that the group was composed of "militant persons" interested in the welfare of the American Negro. According to the informant, the niece attended one meeting of the organization and came to the conclusion that despite its denials of Communism, the group espoused the Communist Party line as the girl had known it in the United States. (U)

b7D per Army

100-157464-32)

~~SECRET~~

XXXXXX  
XXXXXX  
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

1 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b1 with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Document(s) originating with the following government agency(ies) \_\_\_\_\_, was/were forwarded to them for direct response to you.

\_\_\_\_\_ Page(s) referred for consultation to the following government agency(ies); \_\_\_\_\_ as the information originated with them. You will be advised of availability upon return of the material to the FBI.

\_\_\_\_\_ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ For your information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:  
100-157464-34

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X DELETED PAGE(S) X  
X NO DUPLICATION FEE X  
X FOR THIS PAGE X  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

RECORDED-45

~~SECRET~~

August 12, 1953

bl

RICHARD WRIGHT

10053

b7c

[REDACTED]

(S)

bl

In answer to your inquiry set forth in reference communication, we have no objection to your furnishing information previously furnished by us concerning Richard Wright, providing that we are in no way indicated as the source of the information. You are further advised that the identity of the sources furnishing the information contained in our memorandum to you cannot be divulged.

2 - Legat Attache  
London, England

1 - Foreign Service Desk

[REDACTED] b7c

Rec'd [unclear] 6-9-7

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE

RECEIVED FROM DIVISION FIVE  
AUG 13 1953

~~SECRET~~

- Tolson
- Ladd
- Nichols
- Belmont
- Clegg
- Glavin
- Harbo
- Rosen
- Tracy
- Mohr
- Tele. Rm.
- Nease
- Gandy

CLASS. & EXT. BY: SP8 BT/ko  
REASON: FCIM II, 1-2.4.2  
DATE OF REVIEW: 8-25-1001  
8-25-81

~~SECURITY INFORMATION - CONFIDENTIAL~~

88344

~~SECRET~~

NOTE TO SAC's Chicago, Los Angeles, Mobile, and New York:

For the assistance of all offices receiving copies of instant communication, there is attached a copy of a self-explanatory memorandum dated November 20, 1953, which was received from the Department as well as a copy of the petition filed by the Attorney General with the Subversive Activities Control Board seeking to cause the registration of the captioned organization.

Bureau files reflect that each of the individuals referred to in the attachment is well known to the office in the area in which he is believed to reside.

In the absence of any information in your files which would make such action inadvisable, Bureau authority is granted to conduct the requested interviews.

In view of the distinct possibility that the hearing relative to the captioned organization before the Subversive Activities Control Board will commence in the near future, it is desired that the results of your action in this regard be submitted in memorandum form suitable for dissemination to the Department to reach the Bureau no later than December 17, 1953.

- 2 -

~~SECURITY INFORMATION - CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~

July 8, 1954

G.L.R. 9 MAILED  
JUL 8 1954  
NAME CHECKED

CLASS. & EXT. BY *SP-019/16*  
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2  
DATE OF REVIEW *8-25-81*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ RICHARD WRIGHT

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY SLIP(S)  
DATE *6-2-81*

Reference is made to your specific request for information reflecting captioned individuals defection from the Communist Party.

A review of our files reflects that a security-type investigation was conducted during 1943-1946 on a Richard Pathaniel Wright, who is identical with the captioned individual. Wright was born on September 4, 1908, in Natchez, Mississippi. He claims eight years of elementary school education and professes experience as a novelist, playwright, poet, and newspaper reporter. In 1935 he worked on the Federal Writers Project in Chicago and sold articles and short stories to magazines. In 1937 he worked on the same project in New York City. At that time he also did some work for the "Daily Worker" and became a contributing editor of the "New Masses." Both of these publications have been cited as organs of the Communist Party by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, January 3, 1939.

On March 21, 1942, Wright's name appeared on the list of the "Committee to Free Earl Browder," which was published in the March 21, 1942, issue of the "People's Voice." The "People's Voice" has been cited by the California Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, 1948, as among the publications found "to be Communist initiated and controlled or so strongly influenced as to be in the Stalin solar system"

[REDACTED]

Note: USIA requested additional information [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]  
Richard Wright in connection with USIA employee [REDACTED]  
USIA specifically requested information re [REDACTED]  
Communist Party defection by Wright [REDACTED]

Orig. USIA  
Req. Rec: 6/14/54  
[REDACTED] :olg

Tolson  
Boardman  
Nichols  
Belmont  
Glavin  
Harbo  
Rosen  
Tamm  
Tracy  
Mohr  
Winterrowd  
Tele. Room  
Holloman  
Miss Gandy

RECORDED-100

JUL 18 1954  
96

X-12



CONFIDENTIAL

A. K. - 4

MAILED  
JUL 28 1955  
NAME CHECK

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OTHERWISE

July 27, 1955

RICHARD WRIGHT *Summary*  
Born: September 4, 1908  
Natchez, Mississippi

*Richard Wright*

In response to your name check request, you are referred to FBI investigative reports furnished your agency in the case entitled "Richard Nathaniel Wright; Internal Security - C" furnished your agency on October 25, 1944, concerning the subject of your name check request.

Transmitted herewith is an FBI investigative report in the case entitled "Richard Nathaniel Wright; Security Matter - C" concerning the subject of your name check request.

On October 21, 1942, Wright's name appeared on the list of the "Committee to Free Earl Browder," which was published in the March 21, 1942, issue of the "People's Voice." The "People's Voice" has been cited by the California Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, 1948, as among the publications found "to be Communist initiated and controlled or so strongly influenced as to be within the Stalin Solar System."

AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) OF *Class*  
DATE 10-21-81 *and*

[REDACTED]

b1  
b7D

(100-157464-8)  
On July 28, 1944, the New York "Herald Tribune" published an article entitled "Negro Article Criticized Reds As Intolerant" in which Wright was reported to have stated that his Communist Party membership roughly covered

- Tolson \_\_\_\_\_
- Boardman \_\_\_\_\_
- Nichols \_\_\_\_\_
- Belmont \_\_\_\_\_
- Mohr \_\_\_\_\_
- Parsons \_\_\_\_\_
- Rosen \_\_\_\_\_
- Tamm \_\_\_\_\_
- Sizoo \_\_\_\_\_
- Winterrowd \_\_\_\_\_
- Tele. Room \_\_\_\_\_
- Holloman \_\_\_\_\_
- Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

Original and one to G-2  
Reg. Rec'd: 7/6/55

(4)  
Enclosure

RECORDED - 81

INDEXED - 81

CLASS. & EXT. BY...  
REASON - FCIM II 1-2.4.2...  
DATE OF REVIEW 8-25-81

60 AUG 4

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

the period from the latter part of 1932 or early part of 1933 to 1940, and his early association with the Communist in Chicago was broken in 1937, when, he said, he was "ejected" from the Party. Wright stated that he was re-instated in 1937 and maintained a relationship with the Party until 1940. However, Wright's name appeared frequently in the "Daily Worker" during 1941 and 1942. Wright was reported to be a member of the American Committee to Save Refugees as of March 6, 1942, and on September 18, 1942, he was listed as one of the officers of the League of American Writers, advocating a second front for Europe. The American Committee to Save Refugees has been cited as a Communist front by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Report of March 29, 1944, and the League of American Writers has been cited by the Attorney General of the United States pursuant to Executive Order 10450.

(100-157461-5)  
The August, 1944, issue of the "Atlantic Monthly" published an article entitled "I Tried to be a Communist" in which Wright discussed his earliest experiences as a Communist Party member in Chicago and touched upon the problems he faced in trying to present his own ideas to the Party. As a result considerable publicity was given Wright's articles in the "Daily Worker" newspaper. In his column entitled "New Times," published in the August 6, 1944, issue of the "Daily Worker," Benjamin J. Davis, Jr., referred to Wright and to what he called Wright's "public and wholly unjustifiable attack on the Communist." Davis referred to Wright's claim of withdrawing from the Communist in 1940, and asked why Wright waited until 1944 to make his break public. Davis inquired whom Wright was trying to impress and indicated that Wright's attitude was a form of super-leftism.

Wright left the United States for France in May, 1946, and there is no indication in our files reflecting that he has ever returned to the United States.

[REDACTED]

67D

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

[REDACTED]

b7D

An individual who lives in Paris, France, advised in December, 1951, that Wright retained his United States citizenship and lived off his book royalties from American sales. He reported that he had attended a meeting which was a "Communist front" and which was generally critical of American policies, racial and foreign. This meeting was attended by Wright and it was the informant's opinion that even though Wright had publically renounced Communism, he was as much a Communist as he had ever been. (u)

b7D per Army

per Army letter 1/1/52

(100-157464-31)  
On December 16, 1951, another Governmental agency conducting intelligence investigations reported that the Franco - American Fellowship Group was organized almost entirely by Richard Wright, American writer, 14 Monsieur Le Prince, Paris, France, immediately after World War II, and was supposed to be a sponsorship for young writers, artists, and poets who were students in France. At the time of its organization several of the students had made statements to the effect that the group was "Leftist" in the nature of its discussions. According to the informant, Wright and his group were the targets of attacks from one James Baldwin, a young Negro writer who was a student in Paris. Baldwin attacked the hatred themes of the Wright's writings and the attempt of the Franco - American Fellowship Group to Perpetuate "Uncle Tom Literature Methods." (u)

On December 10, 1951, an American citizen, then living in Paris, advised that her niece, who was a student, had been invited to join the Franco - American Fellowship Group by Richard Wright, who stated that the group was composed of "militant persons" interested in the welfare of the American Negro. According to the informant, the niece attended one meeting of the organization and came to the conclusion that despite its denials of Communism, the group espoused the Communist Party line as the girl had known it in the United States. (u)

(100-157464-32)

b7D per Army

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The foregoing information is furnished to you as the result of a request for an FBI file check and is not to be construed as a clearance or a nonclearance of the individual involved. This information is furnished for your use and should not be disseminated outside of your agency.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Assistant Attorney General Warren Glass III  
Criminal Division

December 2, 1953

Director, FBI

CONFIDENTIAL

88343

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF  
AMERICAN-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP, INC.  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C  
INTERNAL SECURITY ACT OF 1950  
Your Reference 149-1022  
FBI File 100-148896

*Richard Wright*

Reference is made to your memorandum of  
December 20, 1953, bearing the initials WO:YBC:and,  
in which you requested that certain individuals  
be interviewed in detail relative to the  
captioned organization.

Pursuant to your request, efforts  
are being made to conduct these interviews and  
the results will be promptly furnished to you  
upon receipt. APPROPRIATE AGENCIES

AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) OF class  
DATE 10-21-81 ens

2cc - Chicago (W/Enclosure) (See Note on Page 2.)

2cc - Los Angeles (W/Enclosure) (See Note on Page 2.)

2cc - Mobile (W/Enclosure) (See Note on Page 2.)

2cc - New York (W/Enclosure) (See Note on Page 2.)

CLASS. & EXT BY  
REASON - F...  
DATE OF REVIEW

*8/2/81*

100-157464-

NOT RECORDED

44 DEC 9 1953

cc - Bufile [redacted]  
cc - Bufile [redacted]  
cc - Bufile [redacted] (Wright)  
cc - Bufile [redacted]  
cc - Bufile [redacted]

YELLOW  
DUPLICATE  
DEC - 4 1953  
MAILED

58 DEC 10 1953

CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFIDENTIAL

On July 28, 1944, the New York "Herald Tribune" published an article entitled "Negro Article Criticized Reds as Intolerant" in which Wright was reported to have stated that his Communist Party membership roughly covered the period from the latter part of 1932 or early part of 1933 to 1940, and his early association with the Communists in Chicago was broken in 1937 when, he said, he was "ejected" from the Party. Wright stated that he was re-instated in 1937 and maintained a relationship with the Party until 1940. However, Wright's name appeared frequently in the "Daily Worker" during 1941 and 1942. Wright was reported to be a member of the American Committee to Save Refugees as of March 6, 1942, and on September 18, 1942, he was listed as one of the officers of the League of American Writers advocating a second front for Europe. The American Committee to Save Refugees has been cited as a Communist front by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Report of March 29, 1944, and the League of American Writers has been cited as Communist by the Attorney General.

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Wright left the United States for France in May, 1946, and there is no indication in our files reflecting that he has ever returned to the United States.

[REDACTED]

670

CONFIDENTIAL

146

CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED] 671

An individual who lives in Paris, France, advised in December, 1951, that Wright retained his United States citizenship and lived off his book royalties from American sales. He reported that he had attended a meeting which was a "Communist front" and which was generally critical of American policies, racial and foreign. This meeting was attended by Wright who had publicly renounced Communism, but he was as much a Communist as he had ever been. (u)

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The foregoing information is furnished to you as the result of your request for an FBI file check and is not to be construed as a clearance or a nonclearance of the individual involved. This information is furnished for your use and should not be disseminated outside of your agency.

CONFIDENTIAL



AIR TOUCH

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

100-157464-356

From : Ambassador PARIS

No. 2135

To : DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

May 3, 1955

Ref :

RECEIVED FROM

MAY 18 1955

STATE DEPT OHB

Subject: First Congress of the Présence Africaine

SUMMARY

A Congress of Scholars of the Negro World, sponsored by the leftist Présence Africaine, is scheduled to take place in Paris September 19-22, 1955. Richard Wright, American negro on the Executive Committee of the Présence Africaine and former Communist Party member, believes that, through a careful selection of the American Delegation to the Congress, the leftist tendencies of the Congress can be neutralized. Mr. PIGNOT, Political Advisor in the French Ministry of Overseas Territories, believes the importance of the Congress should not be underestimated and that every attempt should be made to preserve the orientation of the Présence Africaine to the West.

The Présence Africaine, which describes itself as a Cultural Review of the Black World, is a bimonthly publication, now in its seventh year. The founder and publisher of the Présence Africaine is Mr. Aimone Dige, a rather liberal but strongly Catholic negro, formerly a resident of Dakar but now living in Paris. The orientation of the articles appearing in the Présence Africaine appears to be definitely to the left. Aime CESAIRE, Communist Deputy from Martinique and a poet, and René DEPOSE, a Haitian and alleged to be a member of the Communist Party, are both contributing members of the Committee for Présence Africaine. Other Committee members include: A. ADAIDE, S. O. BIGU, A. BIYDI, A. E. DUSA, B. DABE, B. FILE, A. FRATELLI, H. Paulin JOACHET, J. KI, Sengat KUD, D. MARDESSI, Nicol DAVIDSON, INUTAI, OWUA, Ray AUTRA, A. SADJI, and A. WADE.

The Embassy has been informed that Présence Africaine for a time received a subsidy from the French Government which was subsequently discontinued because of the leftist anti-colonial and generally irresponsible nature of its editorial policy.

The December 1954-January 1955 issue of Présence Africaine carried, among its advertisements, "An Appeal to Black Writers and Artists", printed in both French and English, which constituted an open invitation to the Congress of Scholars of the Negro World, scheduled to take place in Paris, September 19-22, 1955. The invitation bore the names of eighteen people comprising the Executive Committee for the Congress. A mimeographed reprint of the invitation, copy of which is ~~forwarded~~ enclosed (1) to this despatch, was subsequently addressed to the reporting officer. It will be noted that the United States members of the Executive Committee include Louis ARMSTRONG, Josephine BAKER, and Richard WRIGHT.

PCJ:JDorman/JJ

OFFICE OF SP

NOT TO BE FILED

W.O. INITIALS 11

MAY 28 1955

55 JUN 4 1956

100-157464-37

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Page 2  
Dep. No. 215  
Paris

On his own initiative, Mr. Wright called at the Embassy to express certain concern over the leftist tendencies of the Executive Committee for the Congress. He believed the members of the Committee were liberal thinkers and he thought there was a distinct danger that the Communists might exploit the Congress to their own ends. Many members of the Presence Africaine, he said, were in search of an ideal they could not obtain and as such would be fertile ground for Communist exploitation. To counteract such a tendency, Mr. Wright wondered if the Embassy could assist him in suggesting possible American negro delegates who are relatively well known for their cultural achievements and who could combat the leftist tendencies of the Congress. Mr. Wright, the Department will recall, was himself formerly a member of the Communist Party. He indicated that he was originally on the Committee of the Presence Africaine but that he had been dropped recently because of his present anti-Communist principles. However, Mr. Wright's name was retained on the list of hosts for the forthcoming Congress.

By coincidence, Dr. Francis M. HARRIS, Minorities Affairs Adviser, Office of Policy and Programs, with USIA in Washington, was in Paris shortly after Mr. Wright's visit to the Embassy. Dr. Harris kindly submitted the following names of possible delegates to the Congress, names which were subsequently turned over to Mr. Wright:

CARNEY, Elmer A.

Address: 230 Broadway, N. Y. C.; Columnist; State Commission against Discrimination.

LEWIS, Theophilus

For ten years contributor to weekly magazine, "America".

REDDIE, Saunders

Professor of English at Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia; formerly held Leader Grant; author of "No Day of Triumph" and "An American in India".

ROBINSON, Rev. James H.

Minister of Presbyterian Church of the Master, 130th Street and Horningside Avenue, N. Y. C. Has written several books on Africa.

ROWAN, Carl

Writer; has held Leader Grant; representative for "Minneapolis Star Tribune"; attended Bandung Conference; has visited Africa; author of "The Pitiful and the Proud", due to be published in April, 1954.

SCHUYLER, George

New York editor of "Pittsburgh Courier"; anti-Communist editor in Negro Press; has traveled widely.

Mr. Wright appreciated the suggestions furnished him by the Embassy and added these names to a list of suggested delegates he had himself composed and had already

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Page 3  
Desp. No. 2155  
Paris

forwarded to Mr. Ray WILKINS, Executive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Mr. Wright, in forwarding the list of names to Mr. Wilkins, suggested that Mr. Wilkins might work closely with the Department before sounding out each individual on his willingness to serve as a member of the American Delegation.

Mr. Wright's list included the following names:

ELLISON, Ralph

Novelist and former Salzburg Seminar lecturer, now writing in Italy on a prix-de-Rome.

HINES, Chester

Novelist from Ohio.

HUGHES, Langston

Poet, novelist, and author of children's stories.

ROGERS, J. A.

Popular historian from New York City.

ROSEN, Carl

Reporter for Minneapolis Star and Tribune.

SMITH, William Gardner

Novelist and journalist; currently employed in Paris on Far Eastern Desk of Agence France Presse.

TOLSON, Melvin B.

Poet Laureate of Liberia; professor of English at Langston University, Oklahoma; son is Fulbright Fellow in Paris.

The works of Mr. Hines, Mr. Hughes and Mr. Smith, whose names appear in the above list, have been translated into French, as have the works of Mr. Wright.

Mr. Mike JOSSELSOHN, American Executive Secretary of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, has expressed considerable interest in the forthcoming Congress of the Presence Africaine and has called at the Embassy, on the suggestion of Mr. Wright, to discuss the implications and to offer his collaboration in combatting Communist influences.

Mr. Leon PIGNON, Political Adviser in the French Ministry of Overseas Territories, said he felt that the Presence Africaine represented an increasingly important group, a group of liberal thinkers who might well be led down the Communist path. Mr. Pignon felt that every effort should be made to orient the group toward the West. Mr. Pignon said he was glad that the Congress was scheduled to take place in Paris this year but he thought it likely that, unless appropriate steps were taken, next year's Congress might be held in Prague.

Enclosure:

Reprint of Presence Africaine, invitation  
Dec., 1955-Jan., 1956 issue.

Robert P. Joyce  
Counselor of Embassy

Embassy routing slip to: CONFIDENTIAL  
Mr. T. Goodrich, Martinique.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Page 1  
Enclosure No. 1  
Esp. No. 215  
Paris

## AN APPEAL TO BLACK WRITERS AND ARTISTS

For the first time in history, Negro Writers and Artists are going to take the initiative in meeting together and in ascertaining how they are situated and what their specific responsibilities in the world are.

Coloured men all the world over are of opinion that the liberation of the initiative of peoples must enrich human culture to no mean degree. Such a liberation enables man to be more fully conscious of the exact relationship between all beings. It is in man's nature to reveal his dimensions solely by self-expression and not by leaving it to others to express his real self. While techniques are finishing off the measuring of the world's total limits, it is art generated by the free-will of peoples that will delineate, the innermost aspects of non-European human groups. Coddling the cultural appetites of our countries would have been unfair and impoverishing. Likewise it would have been harmful to science to willfully ignore a whole fraction of the animal, vegetable or mineral kingdom.

But it is not culture alone that will derive benefit from our free initiative. Peace of any kind remains ungod if its formula does not integrate the real aspirations of peoples formerly considered as minors. All the same, they must be heard and recognized.

Hence the responsibility of the scholar. He is the animator of modern society, since his calling requires him to shed light on everyone's cultural vocation; in other words he has to reveal to and develop in everyone a sense of his solidarity with other men and the world.

The Negro World, the most neglected by history, is not the last to aspire after the exercise of its cultural responsibilities. Our civilizations, because they hadn't thought it fitting to engrave their laws on brass monuments, are reaping the rich disdain of others. If wedays, the expression of cultural life being necessary to the safeguard of any civilization, we feel more acutely than others the urgency of revealing ourselves to the world. And first of all, the urgency of introducing ourselves to each other.

Negro Scholars don't know each other. They have not yet taken up the measurements of their respective possibilities nor of their common lot. They are scattered and often isolated in surroundings where their personality is not sufficiently turned to profit.

Since nobody has yet assessed the whole contribution of Negroes to mankind's heritage, the task of describing it and defining the genius of their peoples is up to them.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

100-274-11-1

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Enclosure N. 1  
Desp. No. 2155  
Paris

Only a Congress can face a task of such magnitude. This task is so important that the more one is representative by his talent and ability, the less he may evade it.

Artists, historians or poets, theologians, scientists, or thinkers, we are requesting you to take up your original mission in this our common task and examine together with us the following programme:

- 1) How Negroes of culture stand.
- 2) The contribution of Negroes to human culture.
- 3) Themes, styles, forms that typify our people's genius.
- 4) What relations are to be established with the modern world of culture.
- 5) What diffusion should be given to the works of authors.
- 6) Aid to young writers and artists.

The first Congress of Scholars of the Negro World will be held in Paris from the 19th to the 22nd September 1955.

Negro peoples and friendly ones are invited to uphold and help our undertaking, just as scholars of the Negro World are invited to back our plan by their signature and active cooperation.

Writers and Artists are invited to the Congress in mere consideration of their talent.

Peter ABRAMS	(Afrique du Sud)
Louis ARMSTRONG	(U.S.A.)
Kofi ANNABEN	(Gold Coast)
Babib BENELIA	(Soudan)
Professor BUSIA	(Gold Coast)
Professor BIGNANI	(Nigeria)
Josephine BAKER	(U.S.A.)
Aime CESAIRE	(Martinique)
Rene DEPOSEE	(Haiti)
Cyprien EKEMSI	(Nigeria)
Ben ENOCHU	(Nigeria)
Mr. ELLAS	(Nigeria)
Raul LEZOURE	(Dahomey)
Rene HARAIS	(Martinique)
Davidson NICOL	(Sierra Leone)
Leopold Sedar SENGHOR	(Senegal)
Amos TUTUOLA	(Nigeria)
Richard WRIGHT	(U.S.A.)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

4

MAILED

AUG 23 1956

NAME CHECK

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

August 22, 1956

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTG/bce

MAILED

AUG 23 1956

NAME CHECK

RICHARD WRIGHT SUMMARY  
Born: September 4, 1908  
Natchez, Mississippi

Reference is made to your request for copies of  
investigative reports in the event the captioned individual  
has been investigated by this Bureau.

In response to your request, there are attached  
six reports in the case entitled "Richard Nathaniel Wright,"  
which appear to relate to the subject of your inquiry.  
(100-157464)

In addition, you are referred to the memorandum  
entitled "Richard Wright," dated July 8, 1954, which was  
previously furnished to your agency.

The foregoing information is furnished to you as  
a result of your request for an FBI file check and is not  
to be construed as a clearance or a nonclearance of the  
individual involved. This information is furnished for  
your use and should not be disseminated outside of your  
agency.

Enclosures (6)

orig. and one to USIA  
req. rec. 8-7-56

CAA ccc

(4)

Note: [redacted] USIA, requested a search for main files  
He advised that only copies of investigative reports of the  
results of investigation were requested. Reason for request:  
Program for People-to-People Partnership (formerly President  
Program for World Understanding).

Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
Boardman \_\_\_\_\_  
Belmont \_\_\_\_\_  
Mason \_\_\_\_\_  
Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
Parsons \_\_\_\_\_  
Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Tamm \_\_\_\_\_  
Nease \_\_\_\_\_  
Winterrowd \_\_\_\_\_  
Tele. Room \_\_\_\_\_  
Holloman \_\_\_\_\_  
Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

EX-126 RECORDED - 55  
INDEXED - 55  
AUG 23 1956

AUG 23 1956

# FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Reporting Office <b>WASHINGTON FIELD</b>	Office of Origin <b>NEW YORK</b>	Date <b>4/18/58</b>	Investigative Period <b>3/18, 20/58</b>
TITLE OF CASE <b>RICHARD WRIGHT</b>		Report made by <b>[REDACTED] b7c</b>	Typed By: <b>bsb</b>
		CHARACTER OF CASE <b>SECURITY MATTER - C</b>	

**Synopsis:**

On 2/13/58, at American Embassy, Paris, France, subject executed a sworn statement in which he stated he had been a member of the Communist Party from 1932 to 1942. He previously submitted detailed sworn statement at Paris on 9/16/54, in which he stated his disaffiliation with the Communist Party came about because of a series of ideological disputes with communist officials. On 2/13/58, subject executed application for passport at Paris, France, in which he stated he has resided outside the United States since September, 1949, and that his date of return to the United States is indefinite. On 2/21/58, Department of State authorized issuance of passport to subject.

- RUC

**DETAILS: AT WASHINGTON, D. C.**

On March 18, 1958, Miss MARY BARRY, Legal Section, Passport Office, Department of State, made available to SA [REDACTED] the passport file of RICHARD WRIGHT. A review of that file disclosed the following information:

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-81 BY [REDACTED]

Approved <b>TJMY</b>	Special Agent in Charge	Do not write in spaces below	
Copies made: 4-Bureau 2-New York (RM) 1-Washington Field (100-15433)		100-157464-39	REC-1
COPIES DESTROYED 158 MAR 10 1960		15 MAR 8 1958	126
1-9-67 2-9-67 3-9-67 4-9-67 5-9-67 6-9-67 7-9-67 8-9-67 9-9-67 10-9-67 11-9-67 12-9-67		[REDACTED]	
APR 21 1958		[REDACTED]	

This report is loaned to you by the FBI, and neither it nor its contents are to be distributed outside the agency to which loaned.

WFO 100-15433

On February 13, 1958, RICHARD WRIGHT appeared before AGNES SCHNEIDER, Consul of the United States of America at Paris, France, being duly sworn, stated he was submitting the following statement as part of his application for a passport which he executed on February 13, 1958. In that statement, subject stated he was not then a member of the Communist Party, but had been a member of the Communist Party from 1932 to 1942, and called attention to the statement he had executed at the American Embassy, Paris, France, on September 16, 1954, for further details in that regard.

The Communist Party has been designated by the Attorney General of the United States pursuant to Executive Order 10450.

On September 16, 1954, RICHARD WRIGHT appeared before AGNES SCHNEIDER, Consul of the United States of America at Paris, France, being duly sworn, furnished a statement consisting of answers to questions annexed to his statement. In that statement, subject identified himself as being the same RICHARD WRIGHT whose experiences in the communist movement were included in the book, "The God That Failed." Subject stated he could not fix the exact time of his joining the Communist Party because he was a functionary in the Communist Party before he actually joined the Communist Party. He explained that the method used by the Communist Party in recruiting is of such a nature that the line or date of determining the exact membership is very difficult. He stated that to the best of his recollection, the date (about 1933) shown in his book, "The God That Failed", is correct. Subject stated that he is the RICHARD WRIGHT who wrote a letter to the League of American Writers expressing his views on the Spanish Civil War, which was published in May, 1938, in the booklet, "Writers Take Sides."

The League of American Writers has been designated by the Attorney General of the United States pursuant to Executive Order 10450.

Subject stated at the time of writing the above-mentioned letter he was a member of the Communist Party. He stated he is not now a member of the Communist Party of any country of the world.



WFO 100-15433

Subject stated that he disaffiliated with the Communist Party of the United States sometime during the year 1942, and that his disaffiliation came about because of a series of ideological disputes he had with the following Communist officials: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and others. He stated his decision to break with the Communist Party was predicated upon his disagreement with the Communist Party's position upon the Negro question in the United States. He stated that [REDACTED] at that time urged him to become a member-at-large of the Communist Party, but that he refused to heed that suggestion. Subject stated that two years later, in 1944, he publicly indicated his disaffiliation with the Communist Party by means of a press conference held in the office of his agent in New York, PAUL REYNOLDS, and a few months later he wrote two articles in the "Atlantic Monthly" indicating he was no longer affiliated with the Communist Party.

Subject was asked if he was acquainted with [REDACTED] in the Office of War Information. Subject stated that he has a slight acquaintanceship with [REDACTED] and it dates exactly from the period which he did some voluntary work for the Office of War Information in 1942. He stated he met [REDACTED] in the Office of War Information in 1942, and as he recalls was introduced to [REDACTED] and that this introduction took place in the presence of [REDACTED]. Subject stated that [REDACTED] was known to him as a member of the Communist Party, and he described [REDACTED]

In regard to [REDACTED] subject stated he was not known to him as having any affiliation with the Communist Party at that time. Subject stated he was somewhat surprised and taken back when [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and the manner of his being introduced to him implied that [REDACTED] understood the subject's political position very well. Subject stated that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] one of the leading communists of the United States, approached him shortly after his introduction to [REDACTED] and asked him to make a formal application to work for the Office of War Information. Subject stated he told them that this would be rather difficult since he was a publicly known communist writer and had been Chief of the Harlem Bureau of the "Daily Worker."

The "Daily Worker" was an East Coast communist newspaper which suspended publication on January 13, 1958.

Subject stated that [REDACTED] informed him that the Communist Party knew exactly what it was doing in asking him to make this move, and that he should forthwith get an application blank [REDACTED] would aid him in filling out the application blank. Subject stated he obtained the application blank and [REDACTED] called at his home, which at that time was at 11 Revere Place, Brooklyn, New York, and they jointly filled out this application. Subject stated the application reflected that he was a member of the Communist Party and objected to the linking of communism with fascism, as the application implied, and indicated that subject was a patriotic person wishing to make a contribution to the war effort. Subject stated he took this application before a Notary Public and swore to the truthfulness of its contents, an act which at the time made him, perhaps, the only sworn Communist in the United States. Subject stated he took this application [REDACTED] the Office of War Information and handed it to them. He stated they read it and had a consultation about it in his sight, but out of reach of his hearing. Subject stated that their comment to him was, "You are really intransigent." Subject stated he returned to his house and waited anxiously for some days to hear from his application, and he began to suspect that they never actually turned it in. He stated he does not know what happened to it, for he never had a reply to that application. Subject stated he consulted with [REDACTED] about why he never heard about his application, and [REDACTED] astounded him in his home in Brooklyn by telling him he had no recollection of having helped subject make out such an application. Subject stated that upon reflection, he realized that the Communist Party had undoubtedly decided he was too well known as a communist to be sponsored for work in the Office of War Information, and they had, therefore, chosen someone else less politically prominent to take the job

he was supposed to have. Subject stated it was at that time he indicated to [REDACTED]

and that he was through. Subject stated that [REDACTED] him to become a member-at-large of the Communist Party, but subject rejected this suggestion. [REDACTED] Subject stated he has had no further contact with [REDACTED] since that time, nor has he had any contact with the Communist Party [REDACTED]

He stated he has met [REDACTED] on several occasions since then, and has attempted to extract from him an explanation of what transpired concerning his sworn application, [REDACTED] constantly denied all knowledge of such an incident, which has caused the subject to distrust [REDACTED] profoundly.

On February 13, 1958, at Paris, France, the subject executed an application for passport. In that application, the subject stated he was born September 4, 1908 at Natchez, Mississippi, and maintains his residence at 14 rue Monsieur Le Prince, Paris, France. He indicated he has resided outside the United States as follows:

France (May, 1946 to December, 1946)  
France (August, 1947 to August, 1949)  
Argentina  
and France (September, 1949 to date)

Subject stated that he considers Paris, France to be his legal residence and indicated that the date of his return to the United States is indefinite. Subject indicated he was last married at Coytesville, New Jersey on March 12, 1941 to FREDA POPLOWICZ, who was born September 3, 1912 at New York, New York. Subject listed his father as NATHAN WRIGHT, born about 1879 in Mississippi and his mother as ELLA WILSON, born about 1881 in Mississippi. He stated the present whereabouts of his father are unknown, and that his mother presently resides in Chicago, Illinois. He listed as references: [REDACTED]

Subject indicated that he desired a passport to permit him to visit France and other countries for the purpose of travel and business.

On February 21, 1958, the Department of State authorized the American Embassy, Paris, to issue a passport to the subject.

WFO 100-15433

The following information concerning the issuance of previous passports to the subject was set forth in his passport file:

On May 1, 1939, Passport Number 614947 was issued to the subject. In his application for that passport, subject stated he desired to travel to Mexico, England, and France for a visit of one year's duration for the purpose of study and writing.

On September 17, 1940, the subject, by letter to the Passport Office, requested the return of Passport Number 614947 which was taken from him by Immigration authorities at the Mexican border on June 15, 1940. Subject stated that on October 15, 1940, he intends to take a trip to the Soviet Union and will depart from San Francisco en route to Vladivostok via Yokahama. He stated he will be making this trip as an invited guest of the League of Russian Writers and the purpose of the trip will be to study the national minority problems existing in the Soviet Union.

On September 27, 1940, the Passport Office, by letter, informed the subject that there was no imperative necessity for his journey to the Soviet Union and that the Department of State was unable to validate his passport for the journey.

On May 13, 1941, subject, by letter to the Passport Office, requested renewal of his Passport Number 614947 in order to permit him to travel to the Soviet Union and China. He stated he intended to depart from the United States at San Francisco on July 21, 1941 for travel to Vladivostok via Kobe, Japan. Subject stated the purpose of his trip would be to write news articles for the Associated Negro Press, 3507 South Parkway, Chicago, Illinois.

On June 24, 1941, the Passport Office, by letter to the subject, informed him that the Department of State did not believe that accredited American Journalists should be permitted to proceed to the Soviet Union until the Soviet Union was disposed to be more lenient toward the travel of United States representatives.

WFO 100-15433

On March 9, 1946, subject, by letter to the Passport Office, advised that he intended to travel to France on April 15, 1946. He stated that his wife serves him in the capacity of secretary and research worker, and inasmuch as he is to represent the publication, "Twice a Year", to the French public, writing articles about French literary developments, reestablishing contacts for the distribution of the periodical, and seeking manuscripts for reproduction in America, it was necessary that she accompany him.

On April 29, 1946, Passport Number 64829 was issued to the subject and was validated for travel to France only. On March 16, 1948, subject's passport was renewed for two years. At the time of renewal, the subject stated that he has resided in France since May, 1946, for the purpose of serving as a Correspondent for the Associated Negro Press.

On March 6, 1950, Passport Number 122 was issued to the subject at the American Embassy, Buenos Aires, Argentina. In his application for that passport, the subject stated he desired a passport in order to visit France, Haiti, England, Italy, Switzerland, and Belgium.

On November 26, 1951, the American Embassy, Paris, France, furnished information to the Department of State reflecting that the subject was maintaining residence in Paris, and that the Embassy had received information indicating that the subject was willing to go to any length in order to attract attention to the problem of racial discrimination in general and to its manifestations in the United States in particular. It was further stated that the subject has been using as an instrument for his publicity, a group to which he has given the name of "Franco-American Fellowship."

*ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED*  
On February 21, 1952, the subject's Passport Number 122 was renewed for two years at the American Embassy, London, England. At the time of renewal, subject stated he was residing at 28 Glenlucce, London, England, and pursuing the occupation of writer.

On February 23, 1954, Passport Number 2538 was issued to the subject at the American Embassy, Paris, France. In his application for that passport, the subject stated he was residing with his wife, FREDA POPLONICZ, and two children, JULIA WRIGHT, born April 15, 1942 at Brooklyn, New York, and RACHEL WRIGHT, born January 17, 1949 at Paris, France.

WFO 100-15433

There was no additional pertinent information contained in the subject's passport file.

- RUC -

## Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI

DATE: 4/4/58

FROM : SAC, WFO (100-15433)

SUBJECT: RICHARD WRIGET  
SECURITY MATTER - C

Being forwarded herewith to the Bureau are four copies and to New York three copies of the report of SA [REDACTED] WFO, dated 4/4/58.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Copies of passport application photo of subject and his wife will be forwarded to New York via routing slip.

This case was called to the attention of WFO by ROBERT JOHNSON, Chief, Legal Section, Passport Office, Department of State.

ENCLOSURE  
2-Bureau (Encls. 4)  
3-New York (Encls. 3) (RM)  
1-WFO

:bsb

(6)

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/lee

cc - Legat. Paris  
4-17-58 (By R/S 0-25)  
[REDACTED]

REC-1

EX - 126

100-157464-40

SUB CONTROL

57 APR 21 1958 F139

b7c

11-1

New York State letter 5/26/58

m

b6  
b7C  
6/14/82

copy  
AIRTEL

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI [REDACTED]  
FROM : SAC, CHICAGO [REDACTED]  
SUBJECT: [REDACTED]  
INTERNAL SECURITY - C;  
SMITH ACT OF 1940

b2, b7c  
DATE: 5-26-58

ReBulet dated May 2, 1958 entitled "U.S.  
V. [REDACTED] (SMITH ACT MEMBERSHIP RETRIAL)"  
and New York letter to Bureau May 13, 1958 entitled  
[REDACTED] IS-C" and my airtel of May 22, 1958.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] RICHARD WRIGHT,  
the author of "Native Son". [REDACTED] could  
not place WRIGHT in the CP but recalled [REDACTED]  
had numerous discussions with person believed to be WRIGHT  
concerning a manuscript of a publication being prepared  
by WRIGHT. [REDACTED] the individual believed  
to be RICHARD WRIGHT was employed at the settlement house  
at 39th and Langley Avenue, Chicago, Illinois and was  
connected in some way with the Abraham Lincoln School of

- ③ - Bureau (RM)  
4 - New York (RM)

(2-100- [REDACTED] RICHARD WRIGHT)  
5 - Chicago [REDACTED]

(1-100-New [REDACTED] RICHARD WRIGHT)

JVK

(12)

b7c  
ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-81 BY 88 BTG/bce



CG [REDACTED]

A2, b7c

Chicago. [REDACTED] the person believed to be  
WRIGHT was highly regarded by [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] b7c  
Indices of the Chicago Office reflect that  
RICHARD WRIGHT, the author of "Native Son" in 1936 and  
1937 was using the address of Apartment Number 1, 3743 Indiana  
Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

BUREAU

It is requested that the New York Division be  
permitted to contact RICHARD WRIGHT concerning his possible  
knowledge of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] b7c  
It is  
particularly desired that information be developed of  
WRIGHT concerning any statements made by [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

THE NEW YORK DIVISION

AT NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Will on receipt of permission from the Bureau,  
interview RICHARD WRIGHT along the lines set out above.

157464 ✓

May 29, 1958

CONFIDENTIAL

TO: SACS, NEW YORK  
CHICAGO

FROM: DIRECTOR, FBI

CLASS. & EXT. BY...  
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2  
DATE OF REVIEW...

sp8010/bca  
3-31  
p. 25-81

INTERNAL SECURITY - C  
SMITH ACT OF 1940

b2, b7C

Re CG Airtel May 26, 1958, requesting that the Bureau authorize NY to contact Richard Wright concerning his possible knowledge of [redacted]

A review of Bufiles reflects that Wright, on February 13, 1958, executed an application for passport at Paris, France, on which he stated that he has resided outside of the U. S. since September, 1949, and that his date of returning to the U. S. is indefinite. On February 28, 1958, the Department of State authorized the issuance of a passport to Wright.

[redacted]

100-157464 (Wright)

CONFIDENTIAL

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE

YELLOW  
DUPLICATE  
MAY 29 1958  
MAILED

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) OF  
DATE 10-21-81

60 JUN 10 1958

MAIL ROOM ☐

ORIGINAL COPY FILED IN  
5/29/58  
6/4/58



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

American Embassy  
Paris 8, France

~~SECRET~~

4  
Date: June 26, 1958  
To: Director, FBI  
From: Legal Attache, Paris (100-697)  
Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER - C

Re Washington Field Office let to Bureau 4/4/58.

[REDACTED] b1 b7D

P

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) OF

DATE 10-21-81

676  
APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) OF  
DATE 6-9-77

Exempt from GDS Category 1  
Date of Declassification Indefinite  
jul

CLASS. & EXT. BY SP8 BJA/bca  
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2  
DATE OF REVIEW 8-25-81

EX-124

REC-74

100-157464-41

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE

52 JUL 8 1958

~~SECRET~~



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
American Embassy  
Paris 8, France

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE

Date: July 7, 1958  
To: Director, FBI  
From: Legat, Paris (100-697)  
Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER - C

CLASS. & EXT. BY: SP-8 J. J. [illegible]  
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2  
DATE OF REVIEW: 8-2-81

Re Paris letter 6/26/58. J

[REDACTED]

Any additional information coming to the attention of this office concerning the subject will be forwarded to the Bureau. J

One extra copy of this letter is provided for transmittal to New York, office of origin. J

P.

Enclosures - 5

10  
(4) CH  
b7c  
APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) OF 2040 wjm  
DATE 6-9-77

7040  
S Category 1  
Date of Classification Indefinite  
6-9-77

REC-42

100-157464-42

15 JUL 14 1958

5 ENCLOSURE

REC-42 1-9-67

2 Xerox made sent to  
Legat, Paris with Paris lt.  
12-19-66. /pc

67 JUL 23 1958

see not attached G. [illegible]

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) OF  
DATE 10-21-81

b7c



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

United States Department of Justice  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

~~SECRET~~

Washington, D. C.  
July 7, 1958

CLASS. & EXT. BY *SP8 BJK*  
REASON - FCIM II 1-2.4.2  
DATE OF REVIEW *8-25-81* RICHARD WRIGHT

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE

*b1  
b7D  
S*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) *2040* *by JH*  
DATE *6-9-77*

*2040*  
Exempt from GDS Category *1*  
Date of Declassification Indefinite  
*ARC-6-9-77*

*cc - State by (0-144)  
CIA by (0-148)  
ACSI by (0-144)  
NY by (0-25)*

AGENCY  
REQ REC'D  
DATE FORW. *7-22-58*  
HOW FORW. *R/S*  
BY *[initials]*

*b7C*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~  
ENCLOSURE

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) *Class*  
DATE *10-21-81*

*7/2/58*



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
American Embassy  
Paris 8, France

Date: August 21, 1958  
To: Director, FBI  
From: Legal Attache, Paris (100-697)  
Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER - C

Re Paris let 7/7/58.

[REDACTED]

P

2 - Bureau  
1 - Paris  
(3) AM [REDACTED] Category 1  
Date of Declassification Indefinite  
6-9-77

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) OF  
DATE 6-9-77

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DATE OF REVIEW 8-25-81

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APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
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SLIP(S) OF  
DATE 10-21-81 end



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
American Embassy  
Paris 8, France

Date: October 29, 1958  
To: Director, FBI  
From: Legat, Paris (100-697)  
Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER - C

Re Paris letter 8/21/58.

[REDACTED]

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2 - Bureau  
1 - Paris  
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Classified by 2040  
Exempt from GDS Category 1  
Date of Declassification Indefinite  
6-9-77

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
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EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
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APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
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SLIP(S) OF 2040  
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THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
American Embassy  
Paris 8, France

Date: November 21, 1958 ~~SECRET~~ ~~TOP SECRET~~  
To: Director, FBI  
From: Legat, Paris (100-697)  
Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER - C

Re Paris letter 10/29/58. ✓

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2 - Bureau  
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Date of Declassification Indefinite  
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AND FIELD OFFICES  
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SLIP(S) OF 2640 by JWC  
DATE 6-9-77

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DATE OF REVIEW 8-25-91  
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AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) OF 2640  
DATE 10-27-87

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THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
American Embassy  
Paris 8, France

~~SECRET~~

Date: February 13, 1959  
To: Director, FBI  
From: Legat, Paris (100-697)  
Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER - C

Re Paris letter 11/21/58. ✓

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REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2... *1,3*  
DATE OF REVIEW... *8-25-81*

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1 - Paris  
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AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) *6-9-59*  
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Exempt from GDS Category *1*  
Date of Declassification Indefinite  
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DATE *8-5-81* BY *SP8 BT2/lee*

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SUBV CONTROL

Legal Attache, Paris (100-697)

February 19, 1959

Director, FBI (100-157464)

CLASS. & EXT. BY *SPY 10/1/80*  
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2  
DATE OF REVIEW *8-25-91*

RICHARD WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER - C

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Reurlet 11-21-58.

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

1 - Foreign Liaison Unit (route through for review)

NOTE ON YELLOW:

Wright's Security Index card canceled 1948. Self-admitted member of CP approximately 1932 to 1944. Has lived in Paris since 1946. Author of well-known books "Black Boy" and "Native Son" which decry treatment of Negroes in both South and North. Has publicized his break with the CP but alleged to retain some of his previous sympathies.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
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Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
Belmont \_\_\_\_\_  
Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
Nease \_\_\_\_\_  
Parsons \_\_\_\_\_  
Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Tamm \_\_\_\_\_  
Trotter \_\_\_\_\_  
W.C. Sullivan \_\_\_\_\_  
Tele. Room \_\_\_\_\_  
Holloman \_\_\_\_\_  
Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

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COMM - FBI

100-157464-47

25 FEB 25 1959

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67 MAR 2 - 1959



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
American Embassy  
Paris 8, France

Date: February 26, 1959  
To: Director, FBI (100-157464)  
From: Legal Attache, Paris (100-697)  
Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT  
SECURITY MATTER - C

ReBulet 2/19/59 and Paris let 2/13/59. U

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ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
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APPROPRIATE AGENCIES  
AND FIELD OFFICES  
ADVISED BY ROUTING  
SLIP(S) OF 2040  
DATE 6-9-77

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DATE OF REVIEW 8-25-81  
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THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SLIP (S)  
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American Embassy  
Paris 8, France

CONFIDENTIAL

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
OTHERWISE

Date: February 11, 1960

To: Director, FBI (100-157464)

From: Legat, Paris (100-697)

Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT  
SM - C

CLASS. EXT. BY  
REASON - FCIM II  
DATE OF REVIEW

DECLASSIFIED BY  
2/5/82

Reference Paris Office letter to Director 2/26/59.

On 1/21/60, Headquarters, United States Army  
Communications Zone Europe (USACOMZEUR), Office of the  
Director of Security, furnished the Paris Office with a  
report captioned "Possible Subversives Among US Personnel  
in France" dated 1/18/60. This report contains a summary  
of information developed by the above agency in the course  
of a security investigation of [REDACTED]  
Bufile [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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100-157464-249  
Bureau (1 - New York)  
Paris

5 FEB 15 1960

Xerox made sent to  
Legat, Paris with Paris let.  
12-14-66 (re [REDACTED])  
note attached to [REDACTED]

Director, FBI

February 11, 1960

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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per  
Army

Subject WRIGHT, according to this report, resides at 14 rue Monsieur le Prince, Paris 6.

The following information was set forth in the above-referenced U. S. Army report:

"In December 1951, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] stated that Richard WRIGHT is active in the French Communist Party and has been engaged in spreading communist doctrine through the

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per  
Army

Director, FBI

February 11, 1960

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FAFG. Mrs. Richard WRIGHT is the active communist member of the family and has made a point of insulting Negro personnel who hold views other than communist.' Two acquaintances of Source who had attended some meetings stated that as far as they had been able to discover, the FAFG was devoting all of its time to very uncontrolled discussion of the things that were 'wrong with the US.' Source stated that WRIGHT had boasted that he had 'the State Department in my pocket--they call me in for conferences, the fools.'

"In January 1952, an American Negro male student then attending the University of Paris stated that in about June or July 1950, Richard WRIGHT asked Source to join a 'protest' group aimed at 'forcing the employment of more of the Americans of African ancestry' in US government jobs in Paris. Source told WRIGHT that it would be better to be certain of facts before 'going off half-cocked.' WRIGHT then accused Source of having an 'Uncle Tom attitude.' Later the organization tried to interfere with the French policy of employment and held protest meetings at which the members discussed the fact that Algerians, Africans, and French colonials were not employed in other than menial capacities in Paris."

The above data is being furnished to the Bureau and the New York Office for purposes of information and possible interest.

No further action is being taken in this matter but in the event pertinent information is received in the future on captioned subject, it will be furnished to the Bureau and NYO.

RUC.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Central Research Section

Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Parsons \_\_\_\_\_  
 Belmont \_\_\_\_\_  
 Callahan \_\_\_\_\_  
 DeLoach \_\_\_\_\_  
 Malone \_\_\_\_\_  
 McGuire \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Tamm \_\_\_\_\_  
 Trotter \_\_\_\_\_  
 W.C. Sullivan \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tele. Room \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ingram \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gandy \_\_\_\_\_

# Richard Wright, Novelist, Author of 'Native Son'

PARIS, Nov. 30 (AP). — Richard Wright, the Negro author, died of a heart attack Monday night.

The Mississippi-born writer, a longtime Paris resident, is best known for his novels such as "Black Boy" and "The Outsider" dealing with the problems of the Negro in American society.

Mr. Wright, 52, who had suffered recently from intestinal trouble, was hospitalized Saturday for treatment.

Mr. Wright's latest work dealt with a theme he spent a lifetime exploring. Titled "Fishbelly," the book traces the impact of American racial attitudes upon the Negro.

Mr. Wright was born near Natchez, Miss., on September 4, 1908. He attended a Seventh Day Adventist school near his home but quit and went to

He did his first writing during the depression under the auspices of the Federal Writers Project, first in Chicago in 1935 and then in New York in 1937.

Mr. Wright began contributing articles and stories to small literary magazines and to the Daily Worker and New Masses, both Communist publications. He first attracted national attention with "Uncle Tom's Children" in 1937.

"Native Son," published in 1940, established him as one of the foremost American contemporary authors.

Mr. Wright was identified by a Government investigation witness in 1952 as a former Communist who broke with the party.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
 DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTG/buc

file  
 5/9/81

The Washington Post and Times Herald \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Washington Daily News \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Evening Star \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Herald Tribune \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Journal-American \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Mirror \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Daily News \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Post \_\_\_\_\_  
 The New York Times \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Worker \_\_\_\_\_  
 The New Leader \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Wall Street Journal \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_

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EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
Paris 8, France

Date: December 7, 1960  
To: Director, FBI (100-157464)  
From: Legat, Paris (100-697)  
Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT  
SM - C

Re Paris letter 2/11/60.

Enclosed is a clipping from the 11/30/60 issue  
of the "New York Herald Tribune", European Edition, Paris,  
reflecting the death of the subject at Paris on 11/28/60. (X)

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2 - Bureau (Enc. - 1)  
1 - Paris  
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attached it. [redacted] gdw

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ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/bce



## Richard Wright Dies in Paris; American Negro Author, 52

American Negro author Richard Wright, 52, has died of a heart attack in Paris. Death came to the Mississippi-born writer Monday night. A longtime Paris resident, he is best known for his novels, such as "Black Boy" and "The Outsider," dealing with the problem of the Negro in American society.

He had suffered recently from intestinal trouble and was hospitalized Saturday for treatment.

His latest work, published by Julliard just a few weeks ago, dealt with the theme he spent a lifetime exploring. Titled "Fishbelly," the book traces the impact of American racial attitudes upon the Negro.

Mr. Wright was born near Natchez, Miss., on Sept. 4, 1908. He attended a Seventh Day Adventist school near his home but quit and went to work in Memphis, Tenn., at the age of 15.

### From Memphis

From Memphis, he drifted to Chicago, where he worked at odd jobs.

His first writing was done during the depression under the auspices of the Federal Writers Project, first in Chicago in 1935 and then in New York in 1937.

He began contributing articles and stories to small literary magazines. He first attracted national attention with "Uncle Tom's Children" in 1938.

"Native Son," published in 1940, established him as one of the foremost American contemporary authors.

New York Herald  
Tribune  
European Edition  
Paris, France  
11/30/60

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP10/1/81

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1 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b1 with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☒ Document(s) originating with the following government agency(ies) \_\_\_\_\_, was/were forwarded to them for direct response to you.

\_\_\_\_\_ Page(s) referred for consultation to the following government agency(ies); \_\_\_\_\_ as the information originated with them. You will be advised of availability upon return of the material to the FBI.

\_\_\_\_\_ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):  
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☐ For your information: \_\_\_\_\_  
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- ☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:

100-157464-51

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**SECRET**

May 9, 1963

#14258

REC-13

100-157464-51

**RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT;  
EDWARD MARGOLIES**

- 1 - Mr. WC Sullivan
- 1 - Name Check Section
- 1 - Mr. Stefansson

EX-114

[REDACTED]

According to newspaper articles, Richard Wright, who appears to be identical with Richard Nathaniel Wright, born on September 4, 1908, a renowned American Negro author, died as a result of a heart attack in Paris, France, on November 29, 1960. (100-157464)

[REDACTED]

1 - London

1 - Foreign Liaison Unit (detached)

NOTE:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- Tolson
- Belmont
- Mohr
- Casper
- Callahan
- Conrad
- DeLoach
- Evans
- Gale
- Rosen
- Sullivan
- Tavel
- Trotter
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MAILED FROM DIVISION FIVE

MAY 10 1963

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## White Man Is Intrusive

Reviewed by Carl F. Storer

Political Scientist With the Brookings Institution

**WHITE MAN, LISTEN!** By Richard Wright. Doubleday, \$3.

THOSE WHO need to read this book will probably not do so, because it is written by a Negro. Those who do read it may not like it, especially if they are inclined to feel that everything said about social problems must be constructive. For this is a bitter and vituperative book, "explosive and blatantly unacademic."

Richard Wright comments ardently on white-colored relations in the world, dealing principally with the psychological impact of white men's intrusions on colored peoples. Whether they came as missionaries, businessmen or conquerors, Wright argues, they have helped to undermine the cultures of Africa and Asia.

Thus, the colored man has been alienated from his own, while he is also prevented from becoming a part of the white culture around him. He remains the true

outsider, living in two worlds, and able to believe in neither.

No solutions or plans of action are presented. Wright contends that "we all, deep in our hearts, know exactly what to do, though most of us would rather die than do it." Who can say that he is wrong?

To those familiar with Wright's work, this book will have a familiar, personal ring. Perhaps more than the plight of the world's colored peoples, it reflects his own plight as a talented and sensitive American Negro. Reading it, one is mindful of his closing words in an earlier essay:

"I would hurl words into this darkness and wait for an echo; and if an echo sounded, no matter how faintly, I would send other words to tell, to march, to fight, to create a sense of the hunger for life that grows in us all to keep alive in our hearts a sense of the inexpressibly human."

INDEXED 22

INDEXED EX-117  
 62-101087-A  
 133 JAN 14 1958

Wash. Post and Times Herald \_\_\_\_\_  
 Wash. News \_\_\_\_\_  
 Wash. Star \_\_\_\_\_  
 N. Y. Herald Tribune \_\_\_\_\_  
 N. Y. Journal-American \_\_\_\_\_  
 N. Y. Mirror \_\_\_\_\_  
 N. Y. Daily News \_\_\_\_\_  
 N. Y. Times \_\_\_\_\_  
 Daily Worker \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Worker \_\_\_\_\_  
 New Leader \_\_\_\_\_

Date DEC 20 1957

12 JAN 15 1958

From 'The God That Failed':

# WHY I QUIT COMMUNISM

By Richard Wright

## The Author

Richard Wright was born in 1908 on a plantation 25 miles from Natchez, Miss.; of poor Negro parents. Deserted by his father, his mother, a washerwoman brought him up. At 15 he left home and worked for two years in Memphis, where he read E. L. Menckens' "A Book of Prefaces" and decided to become a writer. With \$150 in his pocket he went to Chicago and earned his living by odd jobs until the depression put him out of work. His books are: "Uncle Tom's Children" (short stories), "Native Son" and "Black Boy."

was readily granted. When it came time to speak, I said: "Comrades, for the past two years I've worked daily with most of you. Despite this, I have for some time found myself in a difficult position in the Party. What caused this difficulty is a long story which I do not care to relate now; it would serve no purpose. But I tell you honestly that I think I've found a solution of my difficulty. I am proposing here tonight that my membership be dropped from the Party rolls."

No ideological differences impel me to say this. I simply do not wish to be bound any longer by the Party's decisions. I should like to retain my membership in those organizations in which the Party has influence, and I shall comply with the Party's program in those organizations. I hope that my words will be accepted in the spirit in which they are said. Perhaps sometime in the future I can meet and talk with the leaders of the Party as to what tasks I can best perform."

I sat down amid a profound silence. "Is there any discussion of Comrade Wright's statement?" the secretary asked finally. "I move that discussion of Wright's statement be deferred," Nealsen said.

The next night two Negro Communists called at my home. They pretended to be ignorant of what had happened at the unit meeting. Patiently, I explained what had occurred.

"Your story does not agree with what Nealsen says," they said.

"And what does Nealsen say?" I asked.

"He says that you are in league with a Trotskyite group, and that you made an appeal for other Party members to follow you leaving the Party."

Perhaps, since I was leaving the Party, I thought, out of my feelings I could fling spark into this darkness. I would try, not because I wanted to, but because I felt that I had to if I were to live at all.

I would hurl words into the darkness and wait for an echo, and if an echo sounded, no matter how faintly, I would see other words to tell, to march, fight, to create a sense of hunger for life that gnaws in all, to keep alive in our hearts sense of the inexpressible human.

From the book **THE GOD THAT FAILED**. Copyright © 1954 by Richard Wright. Published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Why Stephen...  
...ism.

The Communist Party fraction in the John Reed Club in Chicago instructed me to ask my party cell—"unit," as it was called—to assign me to full duty in the work of the club. I was instructed to give my unit a report of my activities, writing, organizing, speaking. I agreed and wrote the report.

I went to my first unit meeting—which was held in the Black Belt of the South Side—and introduced myself to the Negro organizer.

"Welcome, comrade," he said, grinning. "We're glad to have a writer with us."

The time came for me to make my report, and I took out my notes and told them how I had come to join the Party, what few stray items I had published, what my duties were in the John Reed Club.

I finished, and waited for comment. There was silence.

I looked about. Most of the comrades sat with bowed heads. Then I was surprised to catch a twitching smile on the lips of a Negro woman. Minutes passed. The Negro woman lifted her head and looked at the organizer. The organizer smiled and a smile. Then the woman broke into untrained laughter, bending forward and burying her face in her hands. I stared. Had I said something funny?

During the following days, I learned through discreet questioning that I seemed a fantastic element to the black Communists. I was shocked to hear that I, who had been only to grammar school, had been classified as an **INTELLECTUAL**.

I learned, to my dismay, that the black Communists in my unit had commented upon my shined shoes, my clean skirt, and the tie that I had worn. Above all, my manner of speech had seemed an alien thing to them.

"He talks like a book," one of the Negro comrades had said. And that was enough to condemn me forever as bourgeois.

**PARTY DUTIES BROKE** into my efforts at expression. The club decided upon a conference of all the Left-Wing writers of the Middle West. I supported the idea and argued that the conference should deal with craft problems. My arguments were rejected. The conference, the club defined, was for books or political activity. Both, was the answer. Write a few hours a day and march on the picket line the other hours.

The conference convened with a leading Communist attending as adviser. The question debated was: What does the Communist Party expect from the club? The answer of the Communist leader



RICHARD WRIGHT  
*The Names They Called Him!*

ran from organizing to writing novels. I argued that either a man organized or he wrote novels. The Party leader said that both must be done. The attitude of the Party leader prevailed and Left Front, for which I had worked so long, was voted out of existence.

The ideas I had expounded at the conference were linked with the suspicions I had roused among the Negro Communists on the South Side, and the Communist Party was now certain that it had a dangerous enemy in its midst. It was whispered that I was trying to lead a secret group in opposition to the Party. I had learned that denial of accusations was useless. It was now painful to meet a Communist, for I did not know what his attitude would be.

**I AVOIDED UNIT MEETINGS** for fear of being subjected to discipline. Occasionally, a Negro Communist—defying the code that enjoined him to shun suspect elements—came to my home

and informed me of the current charges that Communists were bringing against one another. To my astonishment I heard that Buddy Nealsen had branded me a "smuggler of reaction."

Buddy Nealsen was the Negro who had formulated the Communist position for the American Negro; he had made speeches in the Kremlin; he had spoken before Stalin himself.

"Why does Nealsen call me that?" I asked.

"He says that you are a bourgeois degenerate. I was told, 'What does that mean?'"

"He says that you are corrupting the Party with your ideas."

I sought an appointment with Buddy Nealsen. He was a short, black man with an ever ready smile, thick lips, a furrowed brow, and a greasy, sweaty nose. He suffered from asthma and would snort at unexpected intervals.

"They tell me you write."

"I try to," I said.

"You can write," he snorted.

read that article you wrote for the New Masses about Joe Louis. Good stuff. First political treatment of sports we've yet had. Ha-ha."

I waited. "Dick," he began, "we're short of forces. We're facing a grave crisis."

"The Party's always facing a crisis," I said.

His smile left and he stared at me.

"You're not cynical, are you, Dick?" he asked.

"No," I said. "But it's the truth. Each week, each month, there's a crisis."

"You're a funny guy," he said, laughing snorting again. "But we've a job to do. We're alerting our work. Fascism's the danger, the danger to all people."

"I understand," I said.

"We've got to defeat the Fascists," he said, snorting from asthma. "We've discussed you and know your abilities. We want you to work with us. We've got to crash out of our narrow way of working and get our message to the church people, students, club people, professionals, middle class."

"I don't know if I fit into things," I said openly.

"We want to trust you with an important assignment," he said.

"What do you want me to do?" "We want you to organize a committee against the high cost of living."

I was in the midst of writing a novel and he was calling me from it to tabulate the price of groceries.

"Comrade Nealsen," I said, "a writer who hasn't written anything worthwhile is a most doubtful person. Now, I'm in that category. Yet I think I can write. I don't want to ask for special favors, but I'm in the midst of a book which I hope to complete in six months or so. Let me convince myself that I'm wrong about my hankering to write and then I'll be with you all the way."

"Dick," he said, turning in his chair and waving his hand as though to brush away an insect that was annoying him, "you've got to get to the masses of people."

"Dick," he spoke seriously now, "the Party has decided that you are to accept this task."

I went out, angry with myself, angry with him, angry with the Party. Well, I had not broken the decision, but neither had I accepted it wholly.

**I ATTENDED THE NEXT** unit meeting and asked for a place on the agenda, which

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