

Do you and each of you solemnly swear that all of the testimony that you will give in these proceedings will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. ADAMS. I do.

Mr. WANNALL. I do.

The CHAIRMAN. After yesterday's hearing I asked the staff to furnish me with the statutory authority that presently exists that could be said to relate to the FBI's intelligence activities, which was of course the subject of yesterday's hearings. And I am furnished in response to that request title XVIII, section 533, of the United States Code, which reads as follows:

The Attorney General may appoint officials: 1. to detect and prosecute crimes against the United States; 2. to assist in the protection of the person of the President; and 3. to conduct such other investigations regarding official matters under the control of the Department of Justice and the Department of State as may be directed by the Attorney General.

Now yesterday, Mr. Wannall, we were told about a series of activities that were undertaken by the FBI, and indeed, initiated within the FBI, the purpose of which was to harass and discredit Dr. Martin Luther King. I am not referring to the results of any FBI investigative activity, but rather, I am referring to these kinds of initiatives that were undertaken for the purpose of either harassing or embarrassing or otherwise discrediting Dr. King himself. My first question is: was Dr. King, in his advocacy of equal rights for black citizens, advocating a course of action that in the opinion of the FBI constituted a crime?

**TESTIMONY OF JAMES B. ADAMS, DEPUTY ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE FBI, AND RAYMOND WANNALL, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FBI INTELLIGENCE DIVISION**

Mr. ADAMS. No, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. So he was not then thought to be engaged in any criminal activity. In fact, he was preaching, as I remember those days, nonviolence, was he not, as a method of achieving equal rights for black citizens?

Mr. ADAMS. That's right, his advocacy for civil rights.

The CHAIRMAN. His advocacy of civil rights was nonviolent and therefore legal in character.

Mr. ADAMS. That was not the basis of our investigation of him.

The CHAIRMAN. But as you have said, he was not engaging in any unlawful activity in connection with his advocacy of equal rights for black citizens. Is that correct?

Mr. ADAMS. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, is it true that at one time the FBI undertook to discourage an American college from conferring an honorary degree on Dr. King?

Mr. ADAMS. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. On what legal basis does the FBI have a right to interfere, in an effort to discourage a college from conferring an honorary degree upon a man like Dr. Martin Luther King, who was not engaging in or suspected of engaging in criminal activity?

Mr. ADAMS. I know of no basis.

The CHAIRMAN. Why did the FBI do it?

Mr. ADAMS. Well, we have to approach two parts, in my estimation, Senator Church. One, the basis for our investigation of Martin Luther King, which was to determine Communist influence on him, my hands are tied in discussing that, somewhat on the basis that there is certain information which today, from an ongoing operation is sensitive and which, of course, we have made known to you and certain staff members. I would like to say on the basis that from our review we feel that we initially had a basis for investigating Martin Luther King. Now as far as the activities which you are asking about, the discrediting, I know of no basis for that and I will not attempt to justify it.

The CHAIRMAN. You never made a finding, did you, that Martin Luther King was a Communist?

Mr. ADAMS. No, sir, we did not. We were investigating Communist influence and the possible effect on him. We never made such a determination.

The CHAIRMAN. Very well. Then there was no justification for the FBI to interfere?

Mr. ADAMS. To discredit him.

The CHAIRMAN. In conferring an honorary degree upon him?

Mr. ADAMS. I cannot find any justification for that.

The CHAIRMAN. Is it true that the FBI on another occasion intervened in an attempt to prevent Dr. Martin Luther King from seeing the Pope?

Mr. ADAMS. I believe that is correct, sir. There were approximately 25 incidents, I believe, of actions taken in this regard. I think Mr. Schwarz has those available, that I would lump basically all of them into the same situation of I see no statutory basis or no basis of justification for the activity.

The CHAIRMAN. But what was the motive, there being no statutory or other valid basis? What was the motive for attempting to prevent Dr. Martin Luther King from visiting with the Pope?

Mr. ADAMS. In looking at absolute motive, I don't think the files which we have reviewed and made available to the committee, give me a clear picture of what the motive was. I think that there were, the motive was certainly known to Mr. Hoover. It was known to one top official who is no longer with the Bureau and maybe known to others, all of whom have been interviewed by the committee. Matters bearing on what might have been the real motive or the possible motive, I again feel, because of reasons of privacy and delicacy, are not a proper subject of discussion at a public hearing. I think we know what could have influenced this, but one, the primary individual, Mr. Hoover, is not with us. Individuals who were closest to him in this effort are not with us. And the committee itself has interviewed them. So I really am not in a position to discuss this motive issue.

The CHAIRMAN. Nevertheless, you would agree that whatever the motive, it was a very improper thing to do.

Mr. ADAMS. I cannot find any justification, no, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Is it true that after Dr. Martin Luther King had been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, that an anonymous letter was sent to him and to Coretta King, his wife, 34 days before he was to receive the Nobel Peace Prize? [See footnote p. 21.]