

M E M O R A N D U M

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"Restricted"

July 14, 1953

To: Mayor Peter Mandich  
City Hall  
Gary, Indiana

From: Clifford E. Minton, Executive Secretary  
Gary Urban League

Subject: Progress Report on Marquette Park Beach Case

Pursuant to the specific plans discussed with you and Chief of Police Foley on July 11, 12, and 13, 1953, in collaboration with the committee from the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, and agreed upon - - - on July 13, Rev. E. B. Joyner, President of the Ministerial Alliance, Father Wallace Wells, Mr. Al Thomas, and myself with a small group of ladies and children to visit Marquette Park Beach.

The following is an account of our experience which is concluded with specific observations:

1. Arrived at beach at approximately 2:00 p.m.
2. Attendant at beach parking lot volunteered to say he would sell us a parking ticket because he had orders from authorities. He was discouraging and discourteous. He stated we could enter if we desired, but that there was going to be trouble.

We speculated among ourselves how the attendant knew so definitely that there would be trouble.

3. We went to the water front and proceeded to have a normal afternoon at the beach. The children went in the water, etc. The general public at the park paid no particular attention to us -- two or three white people, whose names we do not know, exchanged amicable comments with members of our group about the water, weather, etc.
4. After we were at the beach for about 30 minutes, a group of 15 boys in bathing suits, who were joined later by two girls and a few more boys - came from the west end of the beach and completely encircled our party --- all of them stood within 10 or 12 feet of us in a hostile menacing manner. It was obvious that these youths

consisted of an organized group designed to provoke trouble. We went about our business and paid no attention to this group or the comments they made for our benefit.

5. The police appeared on the scene at the time this gang started to assemble. The police two cars, including Chief Foley, parked their cars about 30 or 40 feet directly behind our group and the gang formation. The officers observed, without getting out of their cars for approximately 15 or 20 minutes.
6. The gang did not pay any special attention to the police and continued to get more aggressive. Two members of the gang pulled out from the regular encirclement, one stood on the east side of us, the other one on the west, and proceeded to toss a ball back and forth at a low level directly over our heads.

At this point the police got out of their cars and endeavored to disperse the gang. The two stopped tossing the ball, but the gang showed very little respect for the officers and never did really disperse while we were at the beach --- after a while, they broke their encirclement formation, but milled around until we left the beach.

7. The police talked with members of the gang. Two members of the gang joined by others later, approached Father Wells and began talking with him in a warning manner. Father Wells was obviously recognized as a Minister and had somewhat of a sobering influence on the boys. I joined Father Wells and the boys --- we engaged in some calm reasoning with the boys permitting them to talk off as much of their emotional pressure as possible. While of another ethnic group and strangers to these boys, we were not able to modify their attitudes, it is quite evident that their Ministers and Priests or other sophisticated leaders close to them, could yield constructive influence. We told the members of the gang, with whom we talked, that we would welcome the opportunity to talk with them at anytime it could be arranged.

Do not be misled by this possibility because the gang was emphatic in their pronouncement, to the end, that they would make serious trouble if Negroes continued to frequently visit the beach.

8. Father Wells and I exchanged ideas with Chief Foley and the other officers concerning effective methods of handling this type of situation.

9. About 4:00 p.m. two people in our party reminded us of appointments they had in the city. We packed and departed. The police and the boys were left at the Park.

#### Observations

1. The solution of the Marquette Park Beach problem demands positive skillful and conscientious police administration supported with sober-realistic community relations work by civic leaders and civil authorities. The present situation is aggravated by the delay in giving due recognition to suggestions regarding advance planning for the inevitable--until an incident required action.
2. Generally the citizens of Gary, respect and uphold democratic rights and the law. The overt behavior of these small irresponsible gangs can be controlled, without violence, if handled properly. Positive control of this "pretty well defined gang" is basic in solving the problem.
3. Positive and skillful police work are essential. Gangs that obviously assemble to agitate or provoke trouble must be dispersed with dispatch and good judgment. If they do not respect the law or respond to officers when given directions, sufficient grounds are provided for the offenders and /or their leaders to be picked up by the police immediately. Disrespect for the law must be clearly discouraged.
4. It is basic that park police, attendants, etc., not only be given orders or directions, but that the proper educational and orientation work be done with them, so that sincere interest and cooperation may be expected.

The attendant at the parking-lot beach entrance showed a definite hostile attitude. He told our group he was admitting us because he had been given specific orders. He stated further that if we went in, there would definitely be trouble, the tone of his voice and the course of events indicated he "definitely knew" what he was talking about.

This supplements the observations made on July 11, and 12, to you and Chief Foley regarding the assignment of officers interested and qualified to perform with skill in this type of work --- and the value of special police training in inter-group relations, which has been utilized by a number of police departments in various cities. I am prepared to provide reference material and to aid on a program of this kind if it should be considered.

5. If not all, it is evident the majority of the boys in the gang of offenders, live in the Froebel School district and Tolleston. Some of them attend Froebel School and churches in that vicinity. If this were not identically the same gang that offended the group on July 1, 1953, a number of the same individuals were present, including one or more of the three policemen talked with at police headquarters on July 2, 1953. Also a young woman that fits the description of the one that played a major role in the July 1, 1953 incident was present.

It is important that the police get the names of the members of this gang and as much information about them as possible viz. their churches, schools, and other institutions or influences. This can facilitate the organization of the influence of their pastors and priests aside from other values. It is obvious that this group represents a homogeneous gang.

These boys appeared to be in their teens or early twenties. Among all of the people at the beach, there was evidence of only one mature adult giving encouragement to these youths.

6. To supplement the educational and community relations work in progress, I plan to initiate efforts today, to enlist the influence of the Priests and Ministers who serve the areas in which these boys live.
7. The second group is scheduled to visit the Park and beach today (July 14, 1953 - arrive approximately 2 p.m.) as previously planned.
8. At the present and until the desired adjustments are achieved, it is important that there be constant police surveillance of the beach.

While at the beach today, I learned from members of the "gang" with whom I talked, that a small group of Negroes had been forced to leave the Park on Sunday, July 12, 1953.

M E M O R A N D U M

"Restricted"

July 16, 1953

To: Mayor Peter Mandich  
City Hall  
Gary, Indiana

From: Clifford E. Minton, Executive Secretary  
Gary Urban League

Subject: Progress Report #2, Marquette Park Beach Case

There are reports of rumors of a mob of white people being formed for action at the beach, Sunday, July 19, 1953. These rumors may or may not be founded on facts. The situation warrants every possible advance precautionary measure. Hot weather is predicted and there will probably be capacity crowds at the beach on Saturday and Sunday. It has been suggested that the State Police be alerted in advance, so if an emergency does develop it may be controlled with dispatch.

Approximately one third (1/3) or more than 40,000 of the citizens of Gary are Negroes. I know of no way to predetermine the plans of all people within this segment of the population that may contemplate or visit the beach.

1. On Wednesday, July 15, 1953, a party of 15 ladies and gentlemen, including Mr. Andrew Means (local building contractor), and I visited the beach from approximately 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
2. Members of party swam, picnicked, and walked the full length of the beach without experiencing any difficulty or particular hostility.
3. Three or four members of the gang of boys involved in the incidents on July 1, and 13, 1953 (referred to in report dated 7/14/53) were observed. These boys held a conference and obviously appeared to be making plans. It was evident that their gang was too small to act and that they could not muster "ready allies". The members of the gang went out the west beach gate. We were at the beach for approximately 20 minutes after their exit. We did not see them again before we departed.
4. As observed in report of 7/14/53, the control of this identified gang is basic in eliminating or reducing the

possibilities of trouble. Pictures of members of this gang are available.

5. Pursuant to previous report, it is imperative that the names and other information about this gang be obtained by the police. This can play significant part in preventative-educational work.

On July 15, as indicated heretofore, efforts were initiated to enlist the influence of ministers in the areas where members of the gang are reported to live. Progress on this approach can be facilitated by police cooperation. Ministers were advised that the Mayor and Chief of Police had been apprized of this need and asked to cooperate. Please advise about this.

It is generally agreed that an educational-preventative approach to this type of problem can be much more effective than an attempted remedy after an overt act. This suggestion is consistent with sound-progressive police methods.

6. Many responsible citizens of both races, who have objective nonpartisan interest, are still apprehensive and openly question the rectitude, organization, and coordination of police on this matter --- orders or instructions withstanding.
7. I have visited the beach on three different days this week with groups, in accordance with the plan agreed upon with you and the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance. Beginning today, I will advise the Chief of Police when I know of special groups going to the beach. However, this may not be necessary, because from among the 40,000 non-white residents, many groups will be visiting the park and beach that I will not have any knowledge of --- therefore, as suggested (7/14/53) constant police surveillance of the park and beach is important until the pattern is clearly established.

M E M O R A N D U M

"Restricted"

July 17, 1953

To: Mayor Peter Mandich  
City Hall  
Gary, Indiana

From: Clifford E. Minton, Executive Secretary  
Gary Urban League

Subject: Progress Report #3, Marquette Park Beach Case

1. Thursday, July 16, 1953, for the first time to my knowledge, outside and apparently radical elements from out of the city appeared and are reported to have manifested an interest in the Marquette Park Beach situation.
2. From the instant the July 1, 1953 incident was reported to me, I have observed closely for any unwholesome elements or attempts to exploit the present situation. It is common knowledge that certain groups, whenever possible, endeavor to "capitalize" on incidents of this type, subvert responsible efforts and give a "kiss of death" to constructive progress.
3. Every considerate step possible, must be taken to prevent the establishment of a "scapegoat" for the few local bigots and other insalubrious potentialities.

It may be advisable to immediately explore possibilities and consider use of F.B.I. resources.

4. If in claiming to sponsor the rights of those formerly by public custom hampered in use of the Beach, subversive leadership succeed in causing a relaxation of the recently announced public policy of sustaining the legal rights of all Gary citizens to the full enjoyment of public facilities, that subversive leadership will have achieved it's goal of creating more confusion and prolonging trouble. They will thereby gain an issue which they can continue to exploit for the purposes of public disorder.

4. The dispersement of gangs obviously assembling to provoke public disorder, before they "strike" is essential to preventing violence. A smaller number of officers functioning under a "policy dispersal" can maintain order much easier --- when large groups are permitted to form and a blow is struck it is very difficult to maintain order. --- It is comparatively simple to distinguish between a crowd assembling to see something exciting like fire or a parade as compared with one assembling for hostile purposes.
5. The Indiana Criminal Code provides authority for "dispersal" under the references on Racing, Routs, Riots, Unlawful Assemblies, Suppression, etc. It is evident that some of the incidents to date coincide with definitions of one or more of these subjects. Attached are digests on Indiana and Illinois Laws on Riots and Mobs.
6. Chicago, Illinois - Mayor Kennelly establishes "Policy of Dispersal": In November 1949, Mayor Kennelly made clear statement of dispersal as a policy --- Public statement 11/30/49 said, "Police have definite orders to disperse any crowd gathering for the purpose of harassing citizens or to do anything which would disturb order in the community."



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July 22, 1953

To: Mayor Peter Mandich  
City Hall  
Gary, Indiana

From: Clifford E. Minton, Executive Secretary  
Gary Urban League

Subject: Progress Report #4, Marquette Park Beach Case

I wish to commend you for calling together the group of community leaders on July 17, 1953 and on the strength of integrated police officers assembled to maintain public order on Sunday, July 19, 1953. Also, I wish to reiterate and call to your attention the following observations:

1. It is evident some progress has been made and that this problem can be solved without serious public disorder. However, atleast for the remaining part of this summer, it will require vigilance and planning in accord with the best in nation-wide experience on similar problems. A great deal of the Nation's experience in this field has been documented in an objective manner.
2. The incident at the beach on July 19, 1953 further substantiates observations made in memoranda July 14 and 16 --- namely ... (a.) The core of the provokers of trouble at the beach consist of a fairly well defined and organized group. (b.) The nucleus of the offenders, July 19, including the boy arrested, consist of the individuals that have caused the trouble in each instance since July 1.
3. Control of this group per preventative police work and the influence of institutions in the areas where they are reported to live is basic.

July 24, 1953

Special Notes - Re: Marquette Park Beach Case

1. Received report that one of Negro officers assigned to Park Sunday, July 19, 1953, while in car in route to park with a police sergeant and other white officers - said in presence of Negro officer, "Why don't these niggers stay where they belong." *The Sergeant*
  - a. Reported that Negro officer reported this to Chief.
2. It is also reported that members of the families of certain police officers are contributing to the confusion and openly expressing undemocratic attitudes about Negroes using Park and beach.
3. Police not given proper protection to Negro
  1. Allows crowds to form - do not move until blow is struck - allows groups to surround Negroes in such manner as to harass and discourage their use of park - do not attempt to prevent hostile groups from forming or attempt to disperse until after act.
  4. No evident efforts to do preventative police work with the individuals - it is known who started the trouble - or to cooperate with interest outside institutions, ministers, etc., who have expressed a willingness to use their influence if the names of the main boys involved, who reside in their districts, are given to them -----
5. Indiana Laws governing police power on matter of this type cited.

Because the danger of lives and security of citizens, particular Negroes, are not protected in this situation within reasonable limits and the Law, the following demands must be made:

1. Mayor adopt a policy of dispersal and instruct Chief of Police to work out immediate plans for implement by or before Sunday, July 26, 1953.
2. Take definite steps to discourage the boys that have incited trouble to date and others that may do so before "blows are struck" in following manner:
  - a. get names and address and other information about individuals who obviously moving the direction of

inciting or provoking trouble.

- b. Cooperate with Ministers etc., who may have influence over such people by identifying them (it has been reported that some of the people who have stimulated and/or made trouble to date are already on probation with Juvenile Court, etc.)
- c. Reemphasize to policemen of all ranks that they have a public responsibility to uphold the law and assume their proper responsibility regardless of their personal feeling or group loyalties.