

Document 169

President's Committee on the Equality of Treatment
and Opportunity in the Armed Forces

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THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EQUALITY
OF TREATMENT AND OPPORTUNITY
IN THE ARMED SERVICES

18 November
1949

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: Successor Policy to WD Circular 124 (Gillem Board Policy)

Enclosed is a copy of new regulations on "Utilization of Negro Manpower in the Army," which the Army proposes shall replace WD Circular 124, and which will probably be issued as a "special regulation."

This special regulation will not be promulgated without the approval of the White House, and the White House will not approve it without first getting the reaction of the President's Committee.

My own comment on the document is this:

1. The Committee's recommendation on MOS and schools can be realized only in two ways:
 - a. By creating enough new Negro units, or converting enough white units to Negro units, so that Negro units have the same spread of MOS, and require the same schooling, as white units.
 - b. By gradually integrating qualified Negroes into white units.
2. If either one of the above two courses is not followed, it is meaningless for the Army to say it is going to open all MOS and schools, for the plain fact is that Negroes will get the MOS and the schooling required by present Negro units and by overhead. That is, the racial quota for schools will still remain in effect whether or not these quotas are put down on paper.

3. But the Committee has very definitely stated to the President in its Interim Report of 11 October that it opposes the further creation of Negro units and that its objective is "the beginning of integration by a slow and practical process."
4. The attached paper does not provide for gradual integration. In paragraph 10, dealing with utilization and assignment, the Army states that normally Negroes will be assigned to the present Negro T/O&E units or overhead, but that Negro specialists may be assigned to white units to fill vacancies requiring special skills. The key word is specialists, which to the Army is quite different from specialties. "Specialist" is a term usually reserved for a critically needed job, for which there is often special recruitment. This would not bring about the gradual integration which the Committee seeks, but only the rare placement of a Negro specialist in a white unit. The Army does not intend to take qualified school-trained Negroes and fill out the MOS in white units which are under strength, as the Committee has proposed.
5. Further evidence that the Army intends to keep its Negro units unimpaired is provided by Paragraph 12, providing that Negro units will continue to be formed in regiments, battalions, companies; by Paragraph 13, assigning Negro officers to Negro units to replace white officers; by the last paragraph of Gray's memo to Johnson of September 30 (copy of which I enclose), stating that "for the foreseeable future negro units must be maintained"; and finally by Gray's letter to Judge Fahy (copy also enclosed) in which he states that his memo to the press on Nov 3 declaring that Negroes would be used in some white units did not constitute an advance over the policy announced by Johnson on September 30.
6. The officer detailed to write the enclosed special regulation has conceded that the regulation does not affect appreciably the Army's present policy on assignment and does not reflect the Committee's recommendations to the Army.

E. W. Kenworthy
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Executive Secretary