

CARTON 9:38 THE BROTHERHOOD OF SLEEPING CAR PORTERS

Police Clippings

1951

1 of 4

PHOTOCOPY REQUEST FORM

USE SEPARATE FORM FOR EACH CONTAINER

CALL NUMBER

72/132c

BOX/CARTON NO.

25

COLLECTION NAME:

Dellums Papers

Folder no. or title

Description of item

Pages to copy

MISC Clippings	"Oakland Police Inquiry"	2
	"Brother Dellums' Charges"	1
	"FERC Killed in Committee" (1953)	1
	"Assembly Votes to Pull FERC Killing Floor"	1
Store room Non-clerical Work 48	Letter 6/1/49	1
	Letter 5/28/49	1
* Police clippings	Letter 6/12/51	2
	Statements "Police Brutality Protested"	2
	"For Immediate Release" press statement	1
Athens Lodge (ELKS)	"Oakland ELKS Win Victory ..."	1
	Release: "Oakland ELKS Win Victory"	3
	Athens Lodge Appeal Committee ... 7/49	5
	Letter & document 4/5/51	4
Alameda County Democratic Council	Letter 2/23/51	1

June 12, 1951

Assemblyman Vernon Kilpatrick
State Capitol
Sacramento 14, California

Dear Mr. Kilpatrick:

I have noted with interest the accusations made against you, part of which seems to be as a result of your activities as Chairman of the Assembly Interim Committee on Crime and Correction. I supervise the Los Angeles Division of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, of which I am an International Vice-President, and make four or more trips to Los Angeles every year. Since I had heard of no such charges on my many trips to Los Angeles, I consulted our representatives there and they have assured me that from their knowledge as well as from their investigation that the charges are unfounded and they are of the opinion that they are absolutely untrue.

As the President of the Alameda County Branch National Association for the Advancement of Colored People I talked with you and Assemblyman Rumford on the telephone and then I wrote you as Chairman of the Interim Committee requesting that you bring your committee to Oakland for the purpose of investigating law enforcement as it affected Negroes and other minorities. As I told you on the telephone as well as in the communication, police brutality in Oakland, insofar as Negroes and Mexicans were concerned, was the order of the day and had been such for a quarter of a century to my personal knowledge. Your committee sent one Mr. Powers here to make the investigation and arrange for the hearings. I am taking this opportunity to again inform you that Mr. Powers remained in close contact with me during his stay in Oakland and we went over the many cases of police brutality together. Mr. Powers checked with me, not only the cases we had in the N.A.A.C.P. files but on every other case other people had brought to his attention.

COPY

and we agreed on the cases that we thought should be presented to your committee. In other words, every case presented had my approval. Therefore no one can honestly say that the communist dominated the hearings held here. As the records will show, I opened the hearings with a verbal statement on police brutality and it's affect upon Negros here. And again at the close of the hearings I took the stand in an attempt to clear the atmosphere which had resulted from an attempt which had just been made to show that the cases presented had been solicited. I don't think that a majority of the committee members caught the point I was trying to make. I then closed the hearings with a verbal statement and approved certain recommendations that had been presented to the committee. The only reason that the N.A.A.C.P. didn't play a more noticable part in presenting the cases was because we have no paid personnel on the staff here whatever.

Finally, I wish to assure you that the hearings were not dominated by the communist. It is my opinion that there are very few persons in Oakland who know more about the communist and their tactics than I do. I am pretty well known, in the ranks of the A. F. of L. as well as among Negros for my knowledge of them and ability to spot them. After all, I have had nearly 30 years experience in Oakland and have participated in labor and civic activities for some 26 years. Obviously then I have had many contacts with the reds as well as many "brushes" with them, therefore I think I am in a position to give a good appraisal of the hearings your committee conducted here.

Very sincerely yours,

C. L. DELLUMS, President
Alameda County Branch N.A.A.C.P.

pan

C O P Y

POLICE BRUTALITY PROTESTED

Local Branch Leads Fight Against Police Brutality

As a result of complaints against police brutality by several organizations along with the local branch of the N. A. A. C. P., the State Assembly Interim Committee on Crime and Correction held public hearings in the Alameda County Court House January 4th 5th and 6th. President C. L. Dellums was first witness and opened the hearings by giving the Committee a broad outline on the question of police brutality based upon his personal experience of more than twenty years. President Dellums told the Committee that police brutality had become so prevalent that generally, Negroes looked upon the police as natural enemies. He stated that one of the major problems facing Negroes is the "Lawlessness of the Law". Chairman Kilpatrick of the Committee asked President Dellums if he couldn't use up all three of the days himself in citing cases from the files of the N. A. A. C. P. and President Dellums said that he certainly could, but in order not to use up all the time the President cited just a few instances; the major one of which was the case of a small 15 year old boy who was picked up with two other kids at the scene of a suspected crime. It was known that these boys gathered because of the excitement and knew nothing of the crime and that the police had no reason for even taking them to jail. After getting them to jail the three policemen took the 15 year old boy, backing him against the wall, making him stretch his arms out against the wall forming a cross. One policeman then held his right arm against the wall, the second policeman pinning the left arm against the wall and the third policeman stepping on the kid's feet and then beating him in the stomach with both fists, a gruesome crime. President Dellums took the boy to Police Chief Tracy's office so that he could give the Chief a statement on it in person. The police were well identified and yet no action of discipline was taken.

The Rev. Mr. H. Geistweit, Pastor of the Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church Oakland, testified next as a representative of the Mayor's Committee on Civic Unity. Mr. Geistweit testified that Mayor Joseph Smith appointed this committee but after the present Mayor, Mr. Rishell took office that Mr. Rishell discontinued the Civic Unity Committee. While the committee was active a serious case of Police Brutality was brought before the City Council and the City Council directed the Mayor's Committee on Civic Unity to investigate it. This was a case of a Negro being kicked in the stomach and bursting his bladder. Rev. Geistweit testified that the Mayor's Committee was definitely convinced that the complaint was true and that police brutality in Oakland was a very serious matter and that it seemed to be out of hand and out of control, and needed state supervision. This report was made to the City Council, the City Council referred it to the City Manager and apparently there it was pigeon-holed.

Ample evidence was submitted during the three day hearing which closed at 11:00 p.m. Friday night, January 6th. The present Chief of Police, who incidentally has only been in office seven months, and the City Manager, Mr. Jack Hassler, who has been in office many years, both admitted that they could not remember a single time when a policeman was disciplined for brutality. Apparently the only thing that is done when such a complaint is made is that the Chief sends another policeman to get a statement from the policeman accused and then take the accused policeman's denial as being the gospel truth and therefore nothing is done. It seems strange that

the City Manager and the Chief of Police would expect a policeman to admit that he had committed such a crime as cited by President Dillums. An array of Negroes and several Mexican Americans took the stand and personally told the Committee about policemen beating them in jail. One Mr. McDaniel told the Committee about his house being held up by an armed robber during Mr. McDaniel's absence and when Mr. McDaniel went to the City Hall to sign a complaint against the robber who had been caught, the robber accused Mr. McDaniel of being in league with him. The police accepted the word of the captured robber against a reputable citizen like Mr. McDaniel and arrested him. Mr. McDaniel told the Committee that Inspector Wood beat him with his fist and a police night stick and there were witnesses who testified that they saw Mr. McDaniel when he went to the City Hall and met him when he was released and he most certainly had been beaten while there. The Chief of Police and the City Manager accepted Inspector Wood's denial and refused to believe Mr. McDaniel and the other witnesses.

At the close another Negro testified that he was arrested on a drunk charge and when he started to step out of the patrol wagon at the City Hall that the policeman kicked him in the stomach, bursting his bladder which resulted in an emergency operation being performed in order to save his life. Ample medical evidence had been presented to show that the man's bladder had been burst by a recent blow. Yet the City Manager and the Chief of Police accepted the denial on the part of the policeman as being the gospel truth. These are just the high-lites of the evidence submitted and near the close of the hearings the Chief of Police lined up a bunch of policemen to take the stand and deny everything.

The Rev. Mr. John Dillingham, Pastor of the Faith Presbyterian Church, 13th and Market Sts, Oakland also testified as a member of the Mayor's Committee giving his views and observations on the serious problem.

The Rev. Mr. Spurgeon Mayfield of Bayview Village Church testified and also was a character witness for Mr. McDaniel.

Mr. Joe Warner, Executive Director of the American Brotherhood testified of some specific cases brought to the attention of his Organization, one reported to him by his own son and gave his general views on the situation.

Dr. Mary Jane Sarvis, Physician and psychiatrist testified on the mental effect this treatment on the part of police have on Negro children and children of other minority racial groups and poor white children.

Mr. Walter Gordon, past president of our branch of the N. A. A. C. P., formerly practicing attorney, ex-assistant football coach at the University of Calif., former policeman of the City of Berkeley and now Chairman of the California Adult Authority Board testified on the difference in the administrative set-up of the Oakland police force and the general set-up of police departments. Mr. Gordon gave valuable general testimony, advice and recommendations for the improvement of the police Department.

Dr. D. McIntyre of the Univ. of Calif. testified on the value of special training for policemen in human relations and offered his service to the Oakland police department to conduct such a course for our policemen. It was announced that his services will be accepted and that the practice will soon be instituted.

FROM:

Alameda County NAACP
Publicity Chairman, Jane Davis
2634 Le Conte, Berkeley 9, Calif.

Discrimination in the Oakland Police Department was the subject of a dinner meeting held by the Alameda County NAACP with Mr. Robert Powers as guest. Mr. Powers is the special investigator for the State Interim Assembly Committee on Crime and Corrections. The meeting was held to discuss the projected Assembly Committee hearings on discrimination in the Oakland Police Department.

The hearings, which will be held January 4,5,6 in the Chambers of the County Board of Supervisors, Alameda County Court House, are to be conducted by Vernon Kilpatrick, Los Angeles, Chairman; Montivel A. Burke, Alhambra, Vice-Chairman; Kathryn T. Niehouse, San Diego; Harlan Hagg, Hanford; and Charles W. Meyers, San Diego.

Those who attended the meeting included Mr. C.L. Dellums, Mr. Earl Swisher, Mr. George Dailey, Mr. George Vaughans, Mrs. Tarea Pittman and Mrs. Jane Davis.

At the meeting, Mr. C. L. Dellums, Chairman of the Alameda County NAACP, stated, "The local chapter has long been concerned with discriminatory law enforcement on the part of the Oakland Police Department. We are aware that Negro citizens and other minority citizens, who have committed no crime are apprehended by the police and treated in an indefensible manner, in some instances brutally beaten". He also disclosed cases in which Negroes were jailed without cause and beaten so severely that serious injuries resulted. He pointed out that this and other types of discriminatory behavior on the part of the Oakland police had so intimidated the Negro community that citizens were afraid to lodge complaints with the Oakland Police Department.

He concluded "It is indeed serious when over one tenth of Oakland's citizens are the victims of brutality on the part of the police who should offer them protection. But it is encouraging to know that the Assembly Committee has seen the problem and will work toward a solution even though our own city officials have adopted a do-nothing policy. They pigeon-holed the report on discrimination in law enforcement made by the Mayor's Committee on Civic Unity and they dishanded the Committee.

"Therefore the local NAACP welcomes the Assembly Interim Committee hearings and we have gone on public record as an association giving our full support and cooperation to Mr. Kilpatrick and his committee."