

The 19 years since CORE was founded have seen the organization change from a dozen or so isolated idealists to one of the foremost and most militant civil rights organizations in America's history. All who have had a part in its growth should have a justifiable sense of pride. We have seen the CORE method of nonviolent direct action become as widely accepted now as it once was misunderstood.

Probably the three factors contributing most to our organization's phenomenal development have been:

1. The Montgomery Bus Boycott which popularized the nonviolent techniques.
2. The southern students' Sit-Ins which captured the imagination of the nation and the world, and
3. The Freedom Rides, initiated and executed by CORE itself.

CORE chapters, members, officers and staff have done a fine and dedicated job in nurturing an idea, responding to events and providing leadership in a new thrust for equality.

CORE's new status in American life confronts us with exciting new opportunities as well as serious problems. This Convention would be remiss in its duties if it did not come to grips with both.

The opportunities are obvious. CORE is well known and respected. As an organization it is admired by its friends and feared by the enemies of its goals. It would be difficult to find a person at all alive to the race relations fight in America who is not aware of CORE. Consequently, we have an opportunity to build the organization as never before. There is hardly any city in the

nation where a CORE Chapter could not now be established if we have the staff available to send in.

With this new prominence, we have a responsibility not only to build our organization, but to provide imaginative and creative leadership in the fight for equality. This is expected of CORE now, and we must not fail to come through.

Moreover, CORE cannot now be ignored by our sister organizations in the civil rights struggle. In spite of inevitable problems which will arise from time to time, relations are basically good. A cooperating relationship exists between CORE and the other civil rights organizations, and such cooperation is desired, not only by us, when it involves no compromise of principle, but also by the other organizations.

The problems are perhaps less obvious than the opportunities. A study of organizations tells us that whenever there is organizational growth there is a heightening of internal tensions. In the vernacular, these are "growing-pains". Conflicts which may have seemed little in the past now loom enormously because so much is at stake. Divergent viewpoints become sharpened and controversies multiply. Yet, above all, we must not allow any internal disputes to wreck the organization. The only differences worthy of the organization's attention are those based upon principles and techniques. There are bound to be differences of opinion in those regards. Were it not so, it would be unhealthy. But we do justice to neither ourselves nor our cause if we yield to the temptation to indulge in pettiness, or vindictiveness, or selfish quarreling. Whatever differences exist must be dealt with on the high level and in the spirit which has been characteristic of CORE and its dedication to the spirit and practice of nonviolence.

Another "growing pain" is the difficulty of maintaining a smooth and efficiently operating organization in the midst of feverish growth and activity. As the other staff reports indicate, our growth has been in terms of organizational prominence, popular support, chapter development, income and budget. The pace has been more than mortal human beings can keep on top of. Machinery, procedures and organizational systems, consequently, have not kept pace with our growth. This situation may hold the seeds of our own destruction if not remedied forthright^{ly}. While we must maintain the warm spirit which has been traditional with CORE, a large organization, as we are becoming, is not viable if it functions as it did when much smaller.

The solution, I think, will lie in the direction of tightening up of our structure and moving toward increasing departmentalization. Toward the end of increasing the functional efficiency of the National Office, an expert on procedures for voluntary organizations is being brought in after Labor Day to make a survey and offer recommendations for changes. In regard to any needed structural changes, the Constitutional Committee at this Convention will have recommendations.

I shall not attempt here an evaluation of the Freedom Rides. In a very large sense they speak for themselves in their impact and effectiveness. They have galvanized public opinion as nothing else has done. They have plummeted CORE four-square into the civil rights arena, and they have cost us and our supporters a sizable fortune. (337 Freedom Riders have been arrested to date in Jackson, Ocala, Tallahassee, Little Rock and Houston. Legal, transportation, bonding and other supporting expenses have zoomed over Two Hundred Thousand Dollars.)

While continuing to meet our commitments on this important phase of our program, we must not be deterred from thinking and planning ahead to similar thrusts in other areas, such as all Places of Public Accommodation, Housing, Employment, Schools and Voter Registration. To map nonviolent direct action strategies in those program areas is a major part of the responsibility of this CORE Convention.