

National Action Committee, October 12, 1961
CORE - Congress of Racial Equality
38 Park Row; New York 38, New York

MINUTES

Present: Farmer, Peck, Carey, Rich, Robinson, Rachlin, Lombard,
Hughes. Invited Observers: Haley, Larkin, Teer, Simon

Absent: Carter, Coleman, Roberts

ICC REGULATIONS: The desegregation ruling was reviewed for the Committee by James Farmer. Gordon Carey reported that a letter was going to all CORE groups asking what action had been or was being taken in their areas to comply with the ruling, and suggesting that each group make a quiet test of its local transportation facilities. Announcement was made of a meeting to be held on October 17th between CORE officials and the ICC and Department of Justice to discuss plans for implementing desegregation of public transportation facilities. Immediately after the ICC ruling was handed down, requests were sent to Trailways and Greyhound to remove "colored" signs in their Jackson, Mississippi terminals, by CORE attorney, Carl Rachlin.

Mr. Rachlin reported on the meeting with Mr. Wright - Vice President and General Counsel of the Illinois Central Railroad, which also included Jim Farmer and Richard Haley of CORE. Mr. Wright stated that the Illinois Central had no segregation signs posted in its Jackson terminal, and that signs present were put there by the local police department. He stated further that the Illinois Central had taken action against its own employees who cooperated with Jackson authorities in delaying a decision on the NAACP desegregation case there. There was discussion of the possibility of a Chicago Freedom Rider bringing suit before the Federal Court in that city to have Illinois

Central facilities in Jackson closed for violation of the ICC ruling.

The Committee noted that presently the ICC ruling deals only with bus companies, that every effort would be made to have this ruling extended to cover all public transportation immediately, and that CORE would through nonviolent direct action seek to facilitate compliance with the ruling if preliminary negotiations failed. Jim Farmer reported that a group of Young Republicans has indicated an interest in taking a Freedom Ride to test the ICC ruling, which would be financed by their local party. Much of their motivation stems from Governor Rockefeller's favorable stand on the Freedom Rides.

DETROIT CORE: Gordon Carey reported that he had met with both factions of this group. Discussions resulted in plans for a new election, merging the two groups under responsible leadership. To assure operation under the rules of CORE's constitution, it was suggested that an impartial observer sit in on the first few meetings after the merger is completed.

SUFFOLK CORE: A visit was made by Gordon Carey and Fredericka Teer, who give a favorable report and recommended affiliation. The Committee voted to affiliate the group.

NAMES OF CORE CHAPTERS AND CHAPTER AFFILIATION: The Committee passed a resolution requiring new chapters to submit for approval the names by which they will be identified. This is to avoid conflict and confusion with already existing chapters. It also voted that an individual who lives in one area and works in another may affiliate with either CORE chapter he desires, rather than being confined to the chapter of his residential area.

ADDITIONS TO NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Jim Farmer

reported that National Chairman, Charles Oldham, had recommended two additions to the Committee -- Alan Gartner, Chairman of Boston CORE and Leverne McCummings, Chairman of Philadelphia CORE, and that replies thus far received were overwhelmingly in favor. Also that Hobson Reynolds of the Elks had accepted membership on the Advisory Committee.

NATIONAL OFFICE PERSONNEL: Jim Farmer read a letter of resignation from James Robinson, Membership Director of CORE. Mr. Robinson's resignation was accepted by the Committee with expressions of gratitude for his long years of service to the organization, and it noted with pleasure his statement that leaving the organization's employ does not indicate termination of his activity with it.

On the recommendation of the National Director, the Action Committee approved the appointment of Norman Hill, formerly of Chicago CORE, to the National Field Staff. Field Director, Carey, gave a brief account of Mr. Hill's background which equips him for service on CORE's Field Staff.

LEGAL DEFENSE OF FREEDOM RIDERS: Carl Rachlin reported on a meeting between himself and James Farmer of CORE, and Jack Greenberg and Constance Baker Motley of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. Agreement has been reached for the Inc. Fund to assume legal defense of Freedom Riders in Jackson, Mississippi, using local attorneys on the cases. CORE will continue to assume responsibility for transportation expenses of defendants where they cannot pay their own. The Legal Defense Fund will not assume responsibility for bond, but will endeavor to raise as much bond money as possible. Mr. Rachlin reported that a close interest in these cases would be maintained by CORE's legal staff-- in the briefs, techniques, etc. Also that the responsibility for the

cases of the Episcopal Ministers would remain with CORE. Press releases will be issued simultaneously by each organization after clearing them with each other. The effective date of the transfer is still to be decided.

Mr. Rachlin also reported on talks with Louis Lusky which revealed the possibility of securing a bonding company to take over Freedom Rider bonds. Jim Farmer received a commitment from Allan Knight Chalmers that he would be active in raising bond money.

Mr. Farmer reiterated to the Committee that take-over by the Legal Defense Fund does not affect future CORE direct action in Mississippi. The Legal Defense Fund, on the other hand, is not committed to assumption of responsibility for any future CORE activity.

Defendants pleading nolo contendere are being sent letters advising them how to handle checks returning bail money to CORE (these checks are being made payable to defendants.)

U S HIGHWAY # 40: NAC member, Jim Peck, recommended to the Committee a CORE motorcade along US 40 from approximately the Delaware Bridge to Baltimore, to highlight discriminatory practices in public facilities along this route, and to test the degree of compliance with President Kennedy's appeal to end discrimination. CORE already has a list of restaurants on this route which have practiced segregation, and will meet in Washington the weekend of October 13-14 with representatives from ADA, IUE, UAW and the NAACP to discuss plans for a united thrust on this project, with ride participants beginning at both the northern and southern tips of the route and converging around Wilmington, Delaware.

The Committee expressed its appreciation to Mr. Peck for his foresight in suggesting such a project, and authorized CORE's Field Staff to proceed with plans to carry it out.

FINANCIAL: Jim Robinson reported that the last appeal letter was showing good returns thus far. Holiday Card sales showed a \$15,442.99 return from 1902 orders, which represents almost five times the amount received for the corresponding period last year. Assuming sales hold up, the intake this year should come close to \$50,000.00 as compared with \$20,000.00 for 1960.

Marvin Rich reported receipt of an additional \$25,000.00 for Bond money on a long term loan. Also that \$10,000.00 had been repaid on the short term \$25,000.00 loan received in September and plans were to pay the remainder in three weeks at \$5000.00 per week. Promise of additional financial aid to CORE had been indicated by UAW and IUD.

GENERAL: Mayor Wagner of New York City declared the week beginning October 16, 1961 Freedom Riders week. Bus tours of the city are planned for October 19-20. Several New Jersey Mayors have also declared Freedom Riders' week, and a fund/raising rally is scheduled for October 21st in Englewood, New Jersey.

A CORE luncheon by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt is planned for October 30, at which it is expected contributions will be made to the organization.

Gordon Carey announced a meeting of the Field Staff in New York City, October 20-21, 1961.

Rudy Lombard is working with the Syracuse, New York CORE Chapter and expects this group to be ready for affiliation within a short time. Field Secretary, Genevieve Hughes, will be traveling to the West Coast the later part of October to work with CORE groups in that area. Formation of a CORE Chapter in Denver, Colorado will be foremost on her agenda. The Field Director advised that numerous CORE groups are in the process of organization.

National CORE is exploring with other organizations in the civil rights field, what action should be taken in the many trouble spots throughout the country. It is generally felt that wherever possible, and particularly in McCombs County, Mississippi, efforts should be made to involve as many local people as possible. CORE recognizes its responsibility to this county where much of the current action is undoubtedly a direct result of the Freedom Rides.

Mr. Farmer reported on a meeting with a representative of Hemisphere Reports, which has access to CBS films, to discuss the possibility of a CORE movie based on the Freedom Rides. This will be pursued further during the next few weeks.

Members of the National Action Committee were delighted to hear from Gordon Carey that he had visited Dr. Walter Bergman while in Detroit, and found him considerably improved.

National Chairman, Charles Oldham, will be in New York October 26 - 27.

The next Action Committee meeting was set for October 27th.