

National Action Committee Meeting, November 27, 1961
CORE - Congress of Racial Equality
38 Park Row; New York 38, New York

MINUTES

Present: Farmer, Rich, Carey, Lombard, Rachlin, Peck, Gartner, Hill.
Invited Observers: Teer, Larkins.

Absent: Roberts, McCummings, Coleman, Carter.

UNION CONTRACT FOR 1961-62: The new contract was unanimously approved by the Action Committee. The contract establishes clerical job classifications for the first time.

CHICAGO CORE CHAPTERS: Field Director, Gordon Carey, reported on a conflict between two CORE groups in Chicago - the affiliated group and a newly formed Southside group which is an outgrowth of the old Emergency Relief Committee formed originally to aid Haywood and Fayette Counties during the voter registration crisis. It was agreed that two groups here, operating as entirely separate entities, would of necessity find some duplication of effort both geographically and politically. National Director, James Farmer, who will visit Chicago the weekend of December 8, 9, 10, was authorized to attempt to negotiate a merger of the two groups within the principles of CORE.

ROUTE #40: On November 8, 1961, CORE's National Office was notified that forty-seven restaurants along Route 40 had agreed to desegregate by November 22. Consultation followed and a decision was made to postpone the planned Freedom Ride along this route on November 11 until after the desegregation date. The Field Director sent wires to those groups and individuals who planned to participate in the Route 40 project, asking that they join the picketing and sit-ins in Baltimore restaurants; this was done and the Baltimore campaign has been in progress since November 11. An outgrowth of the campaign against restaurant segregation in this area is a student steering committee composed of college students of the surrounding community who will continue to wage the campaign and expand it to other areas.

National and Baltimore CORE will continue its work with these students, aiding financially, in organizing workshops, providing lawyers when necessary, etc.

Tests, which are still inconclusive, show that forty restaurants along Route 40 have desegregated, while twenty-four refuse to serve Negroes. The Committee agreed that further work must be done in coordinating the groups active in this project, to avoid some of the difficulties which have arisen during past weeks.

A motion was adopted to notify the Maryland Commission of these restaurants which had agreed to desegregate and have not done so and advise the Commission that CORE will conduct a Freedom Ride against discriminatory restaurants on December 16. The press will also be notified of this Ride. A check will be made first with the restaurants involved to determine if they plan to continue to operate on a segregated basis.

ICC RULING: Approximately 200 tests have been made in some twenty-six states to determine if the ruling is being adhered to. The border states of Kentucky, North Carolina and West Virginia are almost completely desegregated, as far as tests have gone. Partially desegregated are Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida and South Carolina. Louisiana and Mississippi, with some exceptions, still operate largely on a segregated basis. Many tactics to discourage integration of facilities are being tried: Overcharging, closing facilities, hostility, etc. In some cases, there is no identification of bus drivers.

The Committee adopted a motion by the Field Director that CORE push for immediate negotiations with the carriers, particularly Greyhound which so

far has made no reply to repeated requests for a meeting. Also to request further negotiations with the Department of Justice and the ICC, and to work out a project which would dramatize non-compliance with the ruling, possibly using celebrities or other well-known personalities. Two dates are being considered -- Emancipation Day (Jan. 1st) or Lincoln's birthday.

The possibility of cooperation between local metropolitan CORE groups on their different projects, particularly the housing area, was discussed, and it was agreed that such cooperation could be advantageous. Field Secretary, Norman Hill, was asked to explore the possibility of meeting with CORE groups in the New York area with this idea in mind.

FIELD REPORT: Field Secretary, Henry Thomas, is currently working in Alabama with students at Tuskegee Institute, and in Mobile, Huntsville and Birmingham. Elton Cox has formed new CORE Chapters in Baton Rouge and Lake Charles, Louisiana and is now in North Carolina. Ed Blankenheim is working with the Memphis CORE group; Richard Haley is in Florida working with Tallahassee and St. Petersburg Chapters, Tom Gaither is in Jackson, Mississippi and Jim McCain is stationed in South Carolina. Genevieve Hughes is on the West Coast and has organized chapters in Denver and Seattle as well as working with other coast groups in California and Arizona. Regional Representative, Dave Dennis, is working temporarily as a Field Secretary in Louisiana.

REGIONAL OFFICES: A motion was adopted to establish regional offices of CORE on the West Coast, in St. Louis and New Orleans at the earliest possible time.

FINANCIAL: The checking account shows a balance of \$31,000.00; the reserve

account totals \$10,000.00, and bills total \$3,000.00. There is an additional \$11,000.00 available for bond. The Eleanor Roosevelt luncheon brought in between \$11,000.00 and \$12,000.00. The next direct mail appeal, going out within a few weeks, will be signed by Leontyne Price. Marvin Rich pointed out that December and January are usually bad months for finances.

FILM: Negotiations with Hemisphere Reports proved fruitless as far as reducing their asking price of \$35,000.00 to produce this film. The Committee felt that this was entirely too high and began exploration of other sources. A team of three experts will now do the film, at cost, which will run between six and eight thousand dollars.. It should be ready for distribution by January 15, 1962. Atlantic Records will do a long-playing record of Freedom Ride songs, free to CORE, to be offered for sale in conjunction with the film showings. Discussions are still in progress with M. A. Lockhart, who is being considered to promote the film, and it has been made clear that CORE must have complete jurisdiction over all editorial matter in this connection and that the promotion must be done so that the organization will reap as much profit as is possible, financially, educationally and publicity-wise. The National Action Committee accepted, with profound thanks, the offer of the Social Action Committee of the A.M.E. Church to produce the film on the Freedom Rides. We are pleased that Dr. James' offer provides for consultation with CORE in the production. CORE will also be responsible for widespread distribution of the proposed film.

HENRY HODGE MEMORANDUM: James Farmer read to the Action Committee a memorandum which he had received from Henry Hodge urging that the NAC consider moves to effect a closer liason between the Committee and local CORE Chapters,

make more appointments to the Committee outside of the New York area, and that careful planning as to matters of expense, jailings, publicity, etc. be done on all future CORE projects. The Committee recognizes the validity of many of Mr. Hodge's recommendations.

NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING: The dates of February 10 and 11, 1962 were set by the Action Committee for this meeting. Hosts will be Cincinnati CORE and Covington, Kentucky CORE.

The next National Action Committee meeting was set for December 15, at which time the Committee will explore the possibility of a retreat where members may address themselves to the business of CORE policy and program and get away from administrative detail.