

Organization Department Convention Report

The Organization Department is cognizant of the amount of energy that went into the national activity during the year of 1961-62 which skyrocketed our activities into the national limelight and made CORE become one of the most prominent civil rights organizations in the Movement in America today. Because a great deal of field staff time was taken up with national programs the Organization Department could not service existing local chapters as it should, or spare the time to organize new ones. In order for CORE to grow in size and keep knocking down the doors of segregation and discrimination and at the same time not lose its effectiveness, we must give more attention to organizing new groups and supervising the existing chapters.

Therefore, in the remainder of 1963, the Organization Department with the Field Staff will attempt to make this one of the banner years in servicing and in chapter development. From inquiries coming into National Office from individuals interested in CORE-type action, we have every reason to believe that 1963 will be a successful year in the formation of additional groups. There is much fertile soil to be plowed in the Civil Rights movement and we feel that CORE should lead in the plowing. The Organization Department has worked and will continue to work very closely with the Program Department in implementing its program without slackening the work to be done by the Organization Department.

There have been 12 groups affiliated since the last convention.

Fort Smith, Arkansas  
 Pasadena, California  
 Sacramento, California  
 Hartford, Connecticut  
 Annapolis, Maryland  
 Ann Arbor Area Fair Housing Assoc --  
     CORE, Michigan  
 Greensboro, North Carolina  
 Columbia, University, New York  
 Cleveland, Ohio  
 Toledo, Ohio  
 Lebanon, Tennessee  
 Charleston, South Carolina

10 groups were lost through inactivity:

Tucson, Arizona  
 Richmond, California  
 Alton, Illinois  
 Jackson, Mississippi  
 Suffolk County, New York  
 Clarendon County, South Carolina  
 Florence, South Carolina  
 Greenville, South Carolina  
 Rock Hill, South Carolina

Ann Arbor CORE technically disaffiliated and then rejoined as the AAAFHA-- CORE. This brings the total of affiliated CORE groups to 68.

Presently, there are many definite potential groups that will develop into active chapters with a little more servicing from the field staff:

Richmond, California  
 Marin City, California  
 Oakland, California  
 Kansas City, Kansas  
 Minneapolis - St. Paul, Minnesota  
 Memphis, Tennessee  
 Harvey, Illinois

There is a chance of developing many more groups in areas that have expressed interest and have not yet had the services of a staff member. Many of the existing groups require on-going servicing to keep them functioning as a meaningful unit in their communities. The job is large.

## 2. Organization Department report.

Presently, we are trying to situate staff members where they can do the most good, and get to the places that request help so that all possible areas of development can be investigated and worked with. Field Secretary Cox is now stationed in Chicago and will work in the new "Special Area" of Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. Zev Aelony, task force worker, was first located in this area, and did a fine job making contacts, working with the Chicago groups and laying the ground work for Cox.

Chet Duncan took over the West Coast area, replacing Fredricka Teer, who resigned after her marriage. Norman Hill, Assistant to the Program Director became acting East Coast Field Secretary, after the departure of Don Wendell. The other field secretaries remain in their previously assigned area: Tournour in Area Two, where he has recently opened a St. Louis office. (Area Two consists of Kansas, Iowa, Michigan and Nebraska). Mary Hamilton works in Area Three, from her home and office in Lebanon, Tennessee. (Area Three consists of Arkansas, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and Tennessee). Marvin Robinson is in Area Seven (Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas). Dave Dennis is situated in Jackson, Mississippi where he is carrying on the voter registration work, and helping out with the commodity and rural industry programs. Two field areas still do not have field secretaries permanently assigned; these areas cover the Eastern states from N.Y. South to Florida. However, there are plans to get staff to these areas in the future. Field Secretary Jerome Smith, has been "borrowed" by the Program Department, and Frank Robinson is working on Voter Registration, although he has been able to do some work with the South Carolina chapters, and these chapters in turn have been involved in Voter Registration.

This year the first Regional Conferences were held. There were five conferences: New York City, Chicago, San Francisco, St. Louis and Lexington, Kentucky. The conferences have helped in establishing area-wide coordination and have exposed all groups to the ranges of problems that CORE groups have tackled. The conferences have given the older groups a chance to discuss "where do we go from here" and provided the newer groups with added impetus for new projects and increased activity. These conferences took much time and effort on the part of the staff that worked on them and the groups that helped, but the general consensus of opinion is that the conferences are well worth repeating and that the experiment was successful.

It is evident that our present staff must continue their hard work in the field. It is also evident that this is an ever-expanding field of endeavor -- as interest arises and the interested people become a CORE group and embark on a project, new interest is sparked. The Organization Department realizes that it is a nearly impossible task to keep abreast with the growing interest in the entire U.S. in Civil Rights, but the Department and its staff will make all efforts to bring assistance to CORE chapters old and new, and to those in new areas interested in nonviolent direct action.

CORE's Voter Education Project is currently in its second year, having been given a grant of \$14,000 for the six months from May 1963 to October 1963, to work in Louisiana, Florida, and South Carolina. At the end of the first year's grant, totals for these areas were: South Carolina, 3,715; Florida, 3,359; and Louisiana, 618. In Mississippi, where we had a grant for a short period, we registered 61 people.

Weldon Rougeau is working in Florida, Ronnie Moore in Louisiana and Frank Robinson and Emerson Brown in South Carolina. They have all given unstinted effort, with appreciable gains in Negro registration. Miami has been the best area in terms of concrete results. South Carolina has not, until recently in Kingstree, met with any harassment, delaying tactics or refusal to register the Negro applicants. In Louisiana there is much fear in the small rural communities, the registration tests are difficult and even those qualified to pass often fail because of the whim of the Registrar. (In Iberville Parish the original registrar resigned, and was replaced by a woman reputed to be a member of the White Citizens Council.)



### 3. Organization Department report.

Many complaints from Louisiana have been filed with the Justice Department, and on May 20th, the Government began to process these complaints, after some previous preliminary investigation. In addition, the Summer Project in Louisiana is expected to help considerably in overcoming the obstacles to registration there.

Although Voter Registration is not direct action in the traditional sense, valuable grassroots support is being gained from the people who are being contacted, and in the not too distant future, these same people will be able to move toward nonviolent direct action to bring about further changes in their communities.

President Kennedy signed into law May 1, 1962, a measure passed by Congress known as the ARA (Area Redevelopment Act), to bring the resources of the Federal Government to assist areas suffering from problems that have been caused by substantial and persistent unemployment and underemployment. Little is known of this act and the methods of operation, especially in the Deep South. In November 1962, McCain, Frank Robinson, Emerson Brown and Dave Dennis attended a National Sharecroppers Fund conference in Brick, North Carolina. Government officials from the ARA were present to tell of the program to those attending. The audience included members of many Southern communities which would come under this act and could benefit from this knowledge. For many of these people, it was the first time they had heard of the Act, and for most, the first time that it was explained to them in terms of what it could do for them.

Subsequently, it was discovered that a New York textile firm was planning to locate in Berkeley, South Carolina as part of the ARA program. Organization Director James McCain went to South Carolina to get the local Negro community involved in the project, to insure their inclusion in the employment that would come to the area. As expected, the Negroes had been completely left out of all plans for the development. McCain found out later at a COPE conference in Norfolk, Virginia that labor too had been left out of the OEDP Committee (Overall Economic Development Plan) and complained of this fact to the Federal Government. As a result, work was suspended on the factory. CORE has held friendly talks with the New York owner of the factory (a CORE supporter and contributor), and the loan has gone through. The hiring policies are still to be determined. In Lynchburg, South Carolina, through McCain's intervention, a Negro has been placed on the OEDP Committee.

As the Organization Department sees it, the ARA program can be used as an instrument to make great gains for Negro employment and job retraining. Many of the areas are eligible for assistance because of the low level of income for Negro families. Unless something is done, the Negro will be excluded from the projects, and will not receive the benefits of a program directed partly to help him. The Federal Government is necessarily sensitive to pressure to include all elements of the community in the ARA plans. However, they themselves will not take the initiative. Inclusion of the Negroes can only come at the request of community groups. CORE, possibly allied with labor unions, can do much in the way of informing the community about the presence of ARA projects in their area, and taking action to insure the protection of the Negro, especially in the South, where sharecroppers are leaving the land and being forced into city slums to look for work. The ARA program gives CORE the rare chance to break up discriminatory employment before it starts, before it again becomes the "unusual practice" of employment.

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