

NATIONAL ACTION COUNCIL MEETING

June 30 ---July 2

HOTEL MUEHLEBACH
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

The meeting was called to order at 12:35 by the National Chairman Floyd B. McKissick. Mr. McKissick said that this meeting would be limited to discussion on planning and programing.

James Farmer National Director gave a report on the Mississippi situation concerning the 3 missing civil rights workers.

It was suggested that every chapter in the country start testing the new civil rights bill as soon as it is signed into law, specifically looking into sections that concern withdrawal of federal funds.

Mr. Farmer said that it was time to step up activities in California. Two or three task force workers will be sent to California as soon as possible.

REPUBLICAN CONVENTION---Report by Norman Hill

Specific plans so far are:

While Jim Farmer is testifying Friday, July 10th before the platform committee of the Republican Party, there will be a picket line outside to call attention to Farmer's testimony. The Political National Conventions are CORE national projects.

DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION - Report by Norman Hill

It was noted that the support for challenging the seating of the regular delegation from Mississippi is picking up. Only 11 votes out of 110 are needed in order to get a minority report out of the credentials committee.

SNCC's position is that determination as to when formal procedures have been exhausted and direct action should be started is a matter that should be left up to the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. SNCC wants COFO to make decisions which will affect actions inside the convention and wants outside decisions to be made elsewhere.

PROTECTION OF CIVIL RIGHTS WORKERS AND OTHER CITIZENS IN THE SOUTH.

Motion was made by Ralph Rosenfeld and seconded by George Wiley that President Johnson be called at once and that the following resolution on law enforcement by Federal authorities be read to him and that a conference on July 6th be set up between the President and appropriate CORE representatives. That was unanimously carried.

RESOLUTION BY WILL USSERY:

No less than in Oxford and Little Rock, law enforcement in Mississippi has broken down, and the intervention of the Federal Government is essential to preserve the lives and property of American citizens engaged in peaceful activities protected by the United States constitution. Such power exists, presently in the hands of the agencies of the United States Government and the power of the President to insure the rights of American citizens to vote.

The failure of the Federal Government to exercise its existing power, has led to and encouraged violations of civil rights by local law enforcement officials and terrorist groups.

Statements by officials of the Federal Government, such as the United States Attorney General and the F.B.I., that no such power, exist are false and mislead the American people. These powers now exist as follows:

- UNITED STATES CODE
- (a) Title 18 Sections 241, 242, 243, 244
- (b) Title 18 Sections 3052, 3053
- (c) Title 18 Section 1201

Therefore we demand effective use of the United States Justice Department, the F.B.I., the United States Marshals, and the United States Armed Forces if necessary to protect the right of all citizens in Mississippi from brutal acts of terrorists acting under the authority of the local and state officials or with their tacit approval.

Motion by Lou Smith and seconded by Dick Rapp that the National Director, National Chairman appropriate staff and other CORE persons and the mothers and/or wives of the three missing civil rights workers personally deliver a copy of the above resolution to President Johnson and be prepared to effect whatever nonviolent direct action is appropriate if adequate action is not forthcoming. Unanimously carried.

Supplement to telegram from James Farmer to Pres. Johnson to be presented to the President at the scheduled meeting next week regarding the disappearances of three Civil Rights workers in Mississippi.

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We also wish to point out the following instances of terror throughout the South in which few prosecutions and no convictions have been forthcoming:

MISSISSIPPI

- (1) Mr. Herbert Lee of Amite County, Miss. was shot and killed on Sept. 25, 1961 by State Representative Hurst.
- (2) Mr. Lewis Allen, a witness to the Lee slaying, shot and killed in 1964. Allen had agreed to testify at the coroners' hearing if he were given Federal protection. The Federal Government refused to give him this protection.
- (3) Ex-Gov. Ross Barnett and Gov. Paul Johnson cited for contempt of court regarding the enrollment of James Meridith at the U. of Mississippi. At the hearing in New Orleans, Chief Judge Albert Tuttle of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals wished to hold Barnett and Johnson in contempt. Assistant Attorney General Burke Marshall intervened in Barnett and Johnson's behalf, preventing the court from citing them for contempt.
- (4) Gen. Edwin Walker indicted by the Federal Government for inciting to riot. No further action has been taken against Walker.
- (5) Mr. Medgar Evers of Jackson, Miss. was shot and killed on July, 1963, allegedly by Mr. Bryon De La Beckwith.
- (6) In Woodville, Miss. three Negroes were found dead in a car. The local authorities claim death was by carbon monoxide, however, we believe there is evidence to indicate murder.
- (7) Numerous churches have been bombed and/or burned in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and other Southern states. The U.S. Congress passed a bill in 1960 covering the destruction of houses of worship. The Federal Government has not used this authority to arrest and prosecute the persons responsible.

Numerous shootings and beatings have occurred throughout the South and particularly in Mississippi. Until very recently no arrests and prosecutions have been made.

ALABAMA

- (1) Since 1960 over 50 bombings have occurred in Birmingham at homes, churches, synagogues, department stores and schools. No one has been brought to Justice so far.
- (2) The bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in which four children were killed in September, 1963 has resulted in no arrests.

There are, of course, many more instances of such tragedies. It is our firm conviction that the Federal Government, by its failure in previous cases to enforce justice, has indicted itself. Their failure to act to protect the lives of all American citizens is largely responsible for the fate of the three Civil Rights workers who are now missing in Mississippi and may very well be dead.

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Motion made by Will Ussery seconded by Lou Smith that a directive be sent to all CORE chapters that they attempt to organize a representative community delegation including leading liberal, labor and religious figures to seek, on Wednesday, July 8th, the commitment of the highest political office holder in the community to endorse and support the demands encompassed in the N.A.C. memorandum to the President and that such commitment be communicated to the President.

Motion by George Wiley seconded by Will Ussery that the staff be presented with the following recommendations representing the consensus of the NAC for implementation.

MONDAY, JULY 6th.---Farmer, and all meet with President Johnson. After meeting, press conference by Farmer to stress demands and problem.

TUESDAY OR WEDNESDAY--Assuming some administration statement. Farmer press conference will reemphasize demands along with deadline for substantial commitment to action.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8th--At 4:00, New York time that all church bells will ring for two minutes to show support for the enforcement of existing federal statutes as set forth in the CORE memorandum to President Johnson.

THUESDAY THURSDAY-- Local delegations appeal to local church people civil rights groups, politicians and other community leaders to wire the President in support of our demands.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY----- Services of Conscience (possible as part of regular services). Perhaps contact Council of Churches, ect.

MONDAY, JULY 13th---Deadline for President's response for action. Mount direct action at White House by Farmer and NAC. Simultaneous supporting actions in local communities.

Subsequently: Increase action pressure along with press release at each new instance of brutality of terrorism.

AFFILIATIONS: The following chapters were affiliated unanimously by the NAC. Tucson, Arizona; Bakersfield, California; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Dallas, Texas; Phoenix, Arizona; U.C.L.A.--Campus (Bruin CORE); and Greely, Colorado.

CIVIL RIGHTS COORDINATING COMMITTEES: Motion was made by R. Rosenfeld and seconded by W. Sweet that Wilfred Ussery prepare a memo for chapters on the subject of coordination of groups in the civil rights movement which would discuss the difficulties and well as the potentialities of such coordination and that a draft of this memo be submitted to the Steering Committee. Carried 10 for, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

IMPLEMENTATION OF CIVIL RIGHTS BILL: Motion by G. Wiley and seconded by M. Dodson (to be sent to appropriate parties). Since section 201 of the Civil Rights Bill covers accommodation of your company the National Action Council of the Congress of Racial Equality urges you immediately to inform your affiliates of policy of total non-discrimination. CORE members will test facilities upon return from convention July 6th and continue checking periodically.

We would appreciate public commitment of your action. Unanimously carried.

CORE POSTURE ON POLITICAL ISSUES: There was a good deal of discussion which recognized the fact that while CORE traditionally has had a position precluding partison political involvement, recent developments necessitate re-evaluation of this position. The discussion reconized differences often highly significant, between Northern and Southern political climates. It was recognized that the drvelopment of CORE program including such activity as voter registration has necessarily involved chapters in political issues. Some persons brought out the fact that as chapters become truly involved in ghetto communities they will be playing political roles. The dangers of becoming extensions of political parties or machines were noted. It was further noted that where we have limited resources of time and energy we shall usually be wise to pursue direct action rather than political action approaches to our ends. It was moved by W. Sweet and seconded by L. Smith that this body authorize chapters to conduct political education campaigns without specific endorsements of candidates. Carried with one vote against.

NONVIOLENCE AND PROGRAM: While it would be impossible to reproduce the complete discussion this subject which took place, we will attempt to give a few representative points of view which did evolve in the discussion. N. Hill noted that the pragmatism which has attracted many new Negro members gives rise to the problem of the need to produce It is this production of results on issues not the approach of non-violence which attracts persons to our program. F. McKissick felt that nonviolence is what makes CORE significantly different from other civil rights organizations as a way of life and as an integral part of Negro history and development. He felt further that with the basic principle of noviolence our goal is to bring about a revolution to achieve freedom and equality for Negroes. In order to do this we need a cadre who believe in nonviolence and can communicate this belief to the masses. G. Wiley felt that it would be more valuable to discuss non-violence not as an abstract issue but in relation to concrete problems. J. Farmer reflected that historically CORE has demanded a minimum commitment to nonviolence. He now sees the need to recognize non-violence as more than a tactic; that is as a strategy. M. Rich sees nonviolence as means to an end--the end being a changed way of life. He feels that nonviolence is required in order to achieve this end in a society in which men can respect each other. R. Lombard feels that We must reflect on the meaning of Gandhi to the Negro in the community. He notes that traditions of violence and nonviolence exist side by side in the Negro community. He developed further the idea that if we are to communicate the concept of nonviolence in the community we must understand its roots as an intutive, not conscious thing.

GANDHI AWARD: Motion made by W. Sweet and seconded by Mark Dodson that the Gandhi Award be contained with the clear understanding that any person, with the exception of CORE staff, be elegible to receive the award. Consultation with CORE members and staff before making the award is recommended. Unanimously carried.