

CONGRESS OF RACIAL EQUALITY

MINUTES OF MEETING OF NATIONAL ACTION COUNCIL'S STEERING COMMITTEE

Held Saturday, September 26, 1964  
48 West 125 Street, New York City

Members present - McKissick, Lombard, Ussery, Turner, Gartner, Curvin, Due, Rosenfeld, Brown, Lacey, Drake, Dodson, Castle, Sprowal, Farmer, The meeting was convened by the chairman, Floyd McKissick at 10:15 A.M. The minutes of the last meeting were approved, with the exception of the following correction: The Steering Committee is not empowered to pass the by-law on chapter incorporation but it can make that recommendation to the National Action Council for action.

Report on the Washington, D.C. trusteeship - James Farmer

Louis Smith reports that he is optimistic about the chapter in Washington. The general membership has asked to extend the period of trusteeship for thirty days.

Motion - To accept recommendation of Mr. Smith to extend the period of trusteeship.

(Farmer). Motion passed unanimously.

PRINCEVILLE Canning Co. - Gordon Carey

The Princeville Canning Co. has agreed to buy potatoes from farmers in Louisiana who had been pressured because they tried to vote. Other food distributors as the result of having been contacted by CORE brought pressure to bear on the company and the Princeville company has written the farmers, indicating that they would buy their potatoes. There was some question about the facts of this case because thorough investigation had not been carried out. CORE still has a qualified victory, however.

Treasurer's report - Alan Gartner

The treasurer submitted the following financial statement for the months of June, July and August, 1964:

TOTAL RECEIPTS.....	<u>\$268,597.40</u>
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS FOR PERIOD.....	<u>\$280,589.55</u>
BALANCE IN CHECKING ACCOUNT.....	<u>\$ 20,881.72</u>
TRANSFERRED TO MISSISSIPPI ACCOUNT 8/18/64	\$14,857.22
Bills Payable 8/31	\$36,043.55
Taxes Payable 8/31	<u>6,072.28</u>
Total Payable 8/31	<u>\$42,116.83</u>

Balance in VEP Account 8/31	\$2,371.35
" " Mississippi Fund Account 8/31	1,546.12
" " CEP Account 8/31	3,851.92

It was requested that a detailed statement be made of the Mississippi Project income and expenditures. Motion: a complete monthly Mississippi statement be mimeographed and sent with the minutes of the Steering Committee to the contact list and the news media. (Turner, Farmer)

Fund-raising - Community Relations - Val Coleman, Marvin Rich

According to the results thus far it is estimated that the Dick Gregory Tour will gross \$50,000. The tour has been very successful for CORE chapters on local level because it has stimulated fund-raising and enabled chapters to make new contacts. The tour could have been more financially successful if it had been concentrated in large cities alone, (Dick Gregory is scheduled to make 37 stops in 30 days), but it has served an important local function. The large appeal of the year, the budget card mailing has just gone out; expenses of the mailing are \$9-10,000 and the anticipated income is \$175-185,000. A new brochure is available, "Calendar of Coercion," which has been sent out with the budget cards will also be available for chapter selling and Freedom hats are also available for sale (chapters make 40¢ on each hat).

A letter from Miss Dorothy Pitman in the Community Relations Dept. was submitted to the Steering Committee by James Farmer, but was declared out of order. The report of the department was received by common consent.

Southern report - Richard Haley, Dave Dennis, Jerome Smith, Dick Jewitt

Richard Haley presented a total program for Miss. which draws on the experience of the COFO Summer Program. The following programs are planned as part of the project:

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| 1. Freedom Democratic Party and voter registration | 7. Literacy program                                      |
| 2. Freedom Schools                                 | 8. Medical programs                                      |
| 3. Pre-school education                            | 9. Legal programs  |
| 4. White community project                         | 10. Audio-visual program                                 |
| 5. Federal programs                                | 11. Food and clothing distribution                       |
| 6. Community centers                               | 12. Mississippi Student Union (for high school students) |
|  | 13. Libraries  |

It was expressed that there is a need for the phasing of such a program. The Southern staff feels a real urgency for the developing political organization for 1966 and such a comprehensive program is part of their overall plan.

Motion - to include in a discussion on the direction of CORE Southern program as set out by Haley. (Ussery, Dodson). Passed. The problems of cooperation and coordination in the Southern program were then discussed at length. Motion - CORE should hire and/or retain up to five lawyers, one of whom may be a legal co-ordinator working under Carl Rachlin and Richard Haley, for the South. (Turner, Rosenfeld). 13 for, 1 against (Ussery).

Motion - NAC approve the appointment of Dave Dennis as Program Director of the Southern office. (Farmer, Sprowal) Passed unanimously.

Detroit CORE - Triple A

Ralph Rosenfeld presented a plea for help on behalf of Detroit CORE in their dealings with AAA in that city. Motion - that CORE supports the activities of Detroit CORE in their dealings with AAA, and that the National Director be instructed to inform the AAA National office of its support and its intention to notify local chapters of this action. (Gartner, Rosenfeld).  
9 for, 2 against (Brown, Turner).

#### The Direction of CORE - James Farmer

The National Director outlined some of the factors which must be considered in formulating a plan of direction. There is a need for an overall plan in view of a present lack of coordination and relationship between different areas of activity (i.e. jobs to schools, housing to education). Another need will be filled with the hiring of a research person. Furthermore, the development of program has to relate to the structure of CORE. It was therefore recommended by Farmer that there be a program assistant in the department of organization who would relate data to chapter activities. Another recommendation is that there be a political action department set up in Washington, the functions of which shall be to keep chapters in touch with what is going on in legislative matters, propose bills which will relate to our problems, and keep chapters in touch with agencies and programs. Mr. Farmer reported that an administrative assistant had not yet been located. Motion - that chapters be allowed to endorse candidates (Rosenfeld, Turner). Motion to table - with the understanding that the motion be part of the agenda at the next NAC meeting and that chapters be informed that such a discussion is coming and they should communicate their experience and opinions on the subject to the National office (Farmer) before the next meeting. (Gartner, Turner) Passed 11 to 2.

#### Legal Department

Motion - the legal department be instructed to bring back a comprehensive legal program worked out with the So. staff which will seek to solve the legal problems and will take full recognition of four year goals for the Southern region and such program be resubmitted to the NAC at its October meeting (Ussery, Drake)

#### October NAC Meeting

Motion - the next meeting be set up as a retreat to deal with basic program and direction, lasting no less than three and one half days (Suggested time Columbus Day weekend). (Turner, Ussery).

#### Report on Resolutions

Ollie Leeds, Chairman of Brooklyn CORE presented the resolutions recommended by his chapter at the National Convention which were not acted upon at that time. Motion - on the resolution reading as follows: "We propose the establishment of a National Civil Rights selective buying boycott list". - to support the principle of establishing such a periodic boycott list and direct staff to inquire into its feasibility. (Gartner, Farmer). Motion - refer the following resolutions to the new research assistant: "A National concerted, centralized effort to bring major urban areas back under rent control as the first step in our Anti-Poverty campaign" and "National CORE promotes the concept of fully integrated housing." Motion - the following resolutions be referred to the Dept. of Organization so that it might take a survey of membership requirements and consult with the members of the NAC and members of other chapters to work out solutions to the problems: "Uniform minimum national dues requirements for all chapters" and "Uniform membership requirements for all chapters (A. National office issue membership cards)."

## Political Action Department

Recommendation that Don Wendell be hired for the job of head of the political action department to be located in Washington. (Farmer) Motion - that this matter be referred to the retreat at which time the NAC can discuss the specific job description for this post and can also meet Mr. Wendell. (Turner). Motion to table - (Gartner, Farmer) 3 for, 7 opposed. Amendment by substitution - that the National Director be instructed to present to Steering Committee a job prospectus for the Political Action Department. (Gartner, Curvin). Motion passed, 1 against (Turner).

## Other Business

Motion - National Director send the following resolution to staff members: the NAC and its Steering Committee will entertain no items submitted by staff for the agenda without the approval of the National Director and those other persons whom he may designate. Where there is a regional director, such reports submitted by staff must be cleared through him first. (Gartner, Dodson). Passed, 2 against (Castle, Due). Motion - the Steering Committee meet again Sunday morning, Sept. 27 at 9:30 a.m. (Sprowl, Rosenfeld) In attendance shall be only Steering Committee members and the staff which is directly involved in discussion. (Dodson, Farmer). Motion - adopt the proposed Southern program (Castle, Dodson) as outlined below:

### Program

We feel that the Southern office should begin now to develop to the extent that it can service and coordinate the program in the South. The office should be equipped with the following:

#### I. Research Department, to do the following:

- A. Find out the political structure of each state in the region
- B. Do extensive research on federal programs and begin negotiation with the federal government to pressure them into getting programs into the region.

#### II. Program Department, Should have a director to do the following:

- A. Create new and meaningful projects,
- B. Plan for staff workshops and community workshops in which programs are explained,
- C. Be responsible to the Southern office director implementation of programs.

#### III. Communications Department.

- A. Should begin to service the whole regions public relations needs,
- B. Should establish a bi-weekly newsletter,
- C. Should coordinate all press conference and press releases held in the region.

#### IV. Director of the Southern Office

- A. Should be in charge of all activities and departments of the office,
- B. Should have the final say on all decisions made,
- C. Should serve as liaison between the Southern Office and the National Office.

Section 111 failed to pass, but sections 1, 11, and 1V were accepted as part of the Southern office's program.

Chicago Project - Gene Tournour

The impact of the Northern task force project can be summed up in the following ways: 1) task force personnel have had to prove themselves one way or the other, 2) there has been a real impact on other community groups so that CORE is now respected and called upon to share its experience in organizing on a grass roots level and 3) the program has had a real impact on CORE chapters themselves, who now understand what it means to organize and have accepted the program. It was recommended that the three centers be seen as places to train other CORE chapters in the region in community organization and that there be tangible financial backing of the program.

Motion - that CORE support the program for the 3 community enters for six months. (Due, Curvin). Amendment - that there be a full report on this program at the January NAC meeting, including a complete financial report, assessment of successes, and failures and detailed proposals for the future. (Gartner).

Department of Organization - Jim McCain

Report from questionnaire circulated about unity groups - that unity groups do not basically hinder CORE'S activity. Total registered in July and August in the South where CORE workers are now working 6,950. The following chapters were recommended for affiliation: Palm Springs, Cal. (recommended by Chet Duncan), Tri-Cities, CORE in Richland, Wash. (recommended by Chet Duncan) and Kenosha, Wis. (recommended by Joyce Ware). Motion - to affiliate passed unanimously (Dodson, Farmer). Because the Wilson Jr. College chapter is a college chapter, action on its affiliation was referred to the next NAC meeting. The following persons hired as field secretary were recommended for confirmation: Eric Mann, John McDowell, Herbert Callender, Bruce Bains, Spiver Gordon, Mike Lesser. Motion - to confirm passed (Turner, Castle abstained).

Nominations for Vacancies on the National Action Council

Ollie Leeds, Brooklyn CORE was nominated by Farmer. Cecil Brown, Milwaukee CORE was nominated by Turner.

Report of the Committee on Northern Staff

It was the consensus of the committee that the demands of a community oriented program were such that CORE responsibilities to the community could no longer be carried out on a volunteer basis. It was therefore recommended that each chapter begin now to make plans for the selection and hiring of an executive secretary, whose salary would be paid by the chapter. It was further recommended that an intensive two week institute for potential professional leadership be set up at the end of November, open to persons recommended by chapters and screened by the National office (by application form and/or by examination). The following suggestions regarding the training institute were made:

- B. 1) Who should attend? Persons should attend who are mature, have solved their basic personal problems, have some skills and leader

ship ability, a basic sense of organization and are likely candidates for the position of executive secretary or other form of professional leadership in Northern CORE Chapters. They need not be present active members of CORE but can be selected from the broader community. Applicants should be screened by application form or by examination.

- 2) The National office should be prepared to subsidize those persons who must leave jobs and pay some part of travel expenses in those cases where chapters are struggling financially and cannot afford to send people.
- 3) Where? It was the feeling of the group that such an institute take place in an isolated setting (e.g. Pendle Hill).
- 4) What should be included?
  - a. Skills in organization-how to budget, administer an office, delegate authority.
  - b. Program - direction and planning
  - c. How to work with groups - human relations training
  - d. The Northern community - an analysis (power structure, key groups)
  - e. Core history and background, present direction
  - f. How to plan, set up priorities for daily routine
  - g. Factual information on governmental agencies and programs
  - h. Fund raising
  - i. Organizing skills
- 5) Who should do the training: It was agreed that although some of the above subjects could be handled on the workshop level with CORE

people in charge, others required the guidance of experts which could be chosen from other groups.

- 6) How often? It was recommended that the institutes be held at least three times yearly in different regions but not necessarily organized on a regional basis (e.g. Phil. Ohio, West Coast)
- 7) In cases where chapters had no one to send or could not possibly afford an executive sec. it was recommended that leadership persons trained at the institute but not hired by local chapters be made available to these smaller chapters.
  - a. Chapter might arrange to pay this person's salary for a month in exchange for his services.
  - b. These persons should also be considered top priority applicants for field staff positions.

We also talked briefly about additional training for chapter members perhaps in the form of regional workshops under the leadership of the National office and the senior field secretary of the region.

Where chapters decide to make this move, a job description should be incorporated in the local constitution. Motion - adopt report (Gartner, Rosenfeld) and also that the committee be a continuing committee. Passed unanimously.

#### REGIONAL ACTION COUNCILS

Motion - the National Director be directed to designate to the regional vice chairman the senior field secretary of the region and that regional vice chairman shall be able to call upon such persons to assist him in convening and organizing Regional Action Councils. (Due, Ussery). The Steering Committee then became a committee of the whole to discuss the Regional Action Committee's proposals. Meeting adjourned, 4p.m.