

[MAY 1964]

POSITION PAPER - BANK OF AMERICA PROJECT

USAGE: For active members of CORE chapters only. DO NOT RELEASE THIS DOCUMENT to the press but you may use it as the basis of a news release.

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I Background:

Dec. 1963. The California CORE chapters in conference at Fresno unanimously approved undertaking a Bank of America employment project as a report to the Conference revealed a poor showing in the Bank employment pattern of minority persons. Investigation showed: the Bank had over 30,000 employees in about 900 branches, all in California and the minority persons employed were 2.5% of which only 1.9% were Negroes. While the Bank has released higher figures they are unsubstantiated. (May 1964, total employees: 28,553; 635 Negroes, 2.22%; 694 Orientals, 2.43%; 1,942 Latin-Americans, 6.80%; 399 other minority group members, 1.39%. Total minority group employees, 3,670 or 12.85%) Even taking the unsubstantiated figures released by the Bank in May, 1964, examination reveals great inadequacy in minority employment. According to the Census of 1960, the minority population of California was composed as follows: Negro, 5.6%; Orientals, 1.6%; Latin-Americans ("of Spanish surname") 9.1%; other (non-white) minority persons, 0.8%; total minority Californians, 17.1%.

Be advised that the Bank of America began to seek Negro applicants and employees with great zeal AFTER the Fresno CORE conference had announced that the Bank would be the subject of negotiations.

March-May, 1964. The Negotiating Team representing the 26 chapters in California of CORE meets with Bank of America officials at the Bank head office, San Francisco, over a period of two months. The Bank reiterated its policy was one of consulting, not negotiating with CORE. However, the Bank recognized CORE as a "responsible" organization! The Bank accepted a number of CORE proposals, but none of crucial importance. So far they have accepted proposals that:

- . the Bank shall post conspicuously through all various banks "EQUAL OPPORTUNITY" notices.
- . the Bank shall co-sponsor with local boards of education a Distributive education program in high schools with large Negro and other minority group population.
- . the Bank shall contact minority group professional societies, churches as well as minority group newspapers and radio sources in its recruitment program.

II CORE Proposals UNACCEPTED TO DATE.

A. Detailed Statistics: The Bank shall disclose detailed statistics as to

- . job turn-over rate based on past two year's experience.
- . employment applications
- . hirings
- . promotions
- . firings

of Caucasians, Negroes, Spanish-Americans, and Orientals by broad job category and bank location. This information shall be given to CORE.

Bank's Position.

Detailed information as requested above is impossible to gather. The Bank will turn over to the California Fair Employment Practices Commission the following: total number of employees; numbers of Caucasians, Negroes, Latin-Americans and Orientals employed in the state; numbers of Caucasians, Negroes, Latin-Americans and Orientals employed by the Bank in the Bay Area. (Note- the Bank did do this; see Background.)

Be advised that despite newspaper reports that the Bank of America and the FEPC have reached an agreement on the question of detailed statistics, no agreement has been made. We anticipate that some agreement will be reached by B of A and the FEPC which will provide the FEPC with more information than B of A originally said it would give, but less than that wanted by the FEPC.

Position.

The California CORE chapters and the public can determine how effective is the Bank's equal opportunity program only by a close examination by race, broad job category, and area. General statistics are of little value since they do not reveal anything about conditions in a particular community or bank. The absence of job category breakdowns would leave unanswered the question, "Are minority persons reasonably distributed through the work force of the Bank or are they concentrated in low-paying jobs or racial ghettos?" Moreover, unwillingness to give a thorough and detailed employment accounting creates doubt as to the effectiveness and the sincerity of any efforts by the Bank of America.

Why is the job turn-over rate important? It is a major aid in measuring progress of the Bank regarding any equal opportunity employment program. To say you have hired "X" number of minority workers is only meaningful when measured against a turn-over rate. Moreover, a turn-over rate figure would encourage minority persons to apply for openings at the Bank since the minority persons would be able to see the scope of opportunity at the Bank.

As to the practicality of the Bank securing detailed employment information, we can only say that the world's largest banking institution should have no difficulty in compiling detailed statistics by broad job categories, etc. The need for detailed statistics can be seen by the help they would provide community organizations interested in minority group employment in setting up plans. Furthermore, the detailed statistics for a particular bank or community would alert all concerned when there is need for improvement in the particular bank or community and aid in their efforts to diagnose the problem and solve it.

Why not let the Bank of America be the judge of its own effectiveness? The Bank cannot reasonably expect to ask for what amounts to a free hand in determining its equal opportunity effectiveness. The Bank has indicated that it is aware of the need to do more for equal opportunity employment than it has heretofore done. With such a record as that of the Bank of America, it might be unaware in the future, as it has been in the past, of its inadequacies concerning minority employment. The minority communities must have a safeguard that the Bank is indeed making equal opportunity employment a reality.

- B. Report Receiver. The Bank shall disclose the above detailed information (See IIA) to representatives of California CORE chapters 30 days after conclusion of an agreement with California CORE and every 90 days thereafter. At such times progress made by the Bank will be reviewed.

Bank's Position.

The Bank will report only to the California Fair Employment Practices Commission, a government agency. It will not meet regularly with non-government agencies. The Bank will, upon request of CORE or any other organization interested in minority employment, meet informally to confer on what might be done to reach the minority communities with information about Bank employment openings.

CORE's Position.

The FEPC Chairman, Mrs. Carmen Warschaw, has announced that the FEPC staff is too small at present to provide a close check on detailed statistics which FEPC requires of the Bank. (Note that FEPC considers unacceptable the general statistics shown in IIA) Without budgetary and staff increases the FEPC if it were to get detailed statistics would have to spotcheck at best. Under such circumstances, the FEPC would have to slow down handling individual claims of job and housing discrimination filed under existing law. **THIS WOULD RESULT IN INCREASED DELAY AND HARDSHIP FOR THE MINORITY COMMUNITY.** Let there be no mistake: reporting to FEPC in the manner desired by the Bank of America would set a precedent that every employer in the state would attempt to follow when confronted by a civil rights organization. The burden upon the FEPC staff and complainants would increase enormously. Be advised that we have no objection to FEPC receiving detailed statistics as long as we are assured that we will get them too. An exclusive employer-FEPC relationship is what we object to. The FEPC

has stated that it has no guidelines for turning over detailed Bank of America statistics to CORE. In other words, we have been told that FEPC has no rules governing release of such information. As to conferring in order to make suggestions on how to reach the minority communities with information about Bank employment openings, we have done this already in the various sessions held with the Bank of America. We have given the Bank lists of newspapers and radio stations in California which have large minority group followings as well as the names of community contacts (church groups, etc.) for the reception of Bank of America information.

Willingness to discuss community contacts is no substitute for discussion of employment progress backed up with detailed statistics.

To conclude, we point out that: we have asked FEPC if it could be effective in checking detailed statistics if such were provided by the Bank. The FEPC answered that in essence it could not do so with existing budget and staff. We subscribe to the FEPC requests for additional funds and staff.

We hope that the day will come when the FEPC will be so strengthened that CORE will no longer need to supervise equal opportunity in employment in California. Until that day, CORE will continue to meet its responsibility to minority Americans.

Be advised that:

1) We have not asked and do not intend to ask for a quota for minority employment in the Bank of America! A major part of your public relations releases should be devoted to this point - if at all possible in advance of a Bank of America statement claiming otherwise.

2) We of CORE have met with the Bank for over two months. We have negotiated in good faith, making every effort to seek a solution over the conference table. On the crucial points described in the above paper, the Bank of America has been unyielding. We have pointed out our desire to seek a solution through negotiation, for demonstrations are CORE's last resort undertaken only after negotiations have failed. This is CORE policy according to CORE Rules For Action.

3) You can expect the Bank to pass off tokenism for a real equal opportunity program. Numbers of Negroes have been hired in recent months by the Bank in response to this CORE project. The Bank has even been discovered to shift around many of its Negro employees of late in an effort to impress the public!

4) We believe that the Bank insists on dealing with the FEPC because the Bank knows that the FEPC is ineffective. The public must be informed of the totally irresponsible conduct of the Bank of America!

FOR YOUR INFORMATION: Bank of America Project Headquarters effective immediately will be:

Regional Office of CORE  
2085 Sutter Street  
San Francisco, California.

Jordan 7-3430. (A telephone answering service will be set up to relay only that you have called; no substantive messages will be taken.)

All suggestions and inquiries should be referred to the above. Press clippings and editorial comment on the Bank of America project would be welcome, too.

Confidential information should be entrusted to the mail only.