

# Bank of America and the pickets:

## *What's it about?*

CORE's dispute with Bank of America has nothing to do with the bank's position as an equal opportunity employer. It is not related to the bank's willingness, even eagerness to hire qualified Negro applicants.

Rather, the point at issue is whether this bank, or any other corporation, should give detailed statistical information about its operations to a pressure group in order that that pressure group may set itself up as a policing agency. Our bank's answer is unequivocally and finally "NO!"

This bank has no intention of being policed by any nongovernment agency, and it particularly refuses to be policed by a self-appointed pressure group whose regard for the truth and whose sense of reasonableness are open to question.

Moreover, the conduct of CORE in its discussions with us clearly indicates that CORE is more interested in staging demonstrations than they are in assuring jobs for members of minority groups.

Our refusal to give CORE detailed statistical data does not represent an effort on the bank's part to conceal facts on minority group employment. Bank of America has voluntarily offered to provide such information to the California Fair Employment Practices Commission—the legally appointed government agency responsible for handling such statistics—for its use in doing its duty under the law.

As of this week, Bank of America employs 28,553 people in 860 California branches. Minority group employees total 3,670 or 12.85% of our work force, of whom 640 are Negroes. Negroes are employed as officers of our bank—including two of our branch managers and others in managerial and supervisory positions.

Bank of America recognizes that civil rights represent an urgent social problem and is seeking to do its full civic duty toward alleviating the problem.

To this end, and consistent with our primary duty of providing competent service to the public, we have taken a number of steps to increase our employment of minority groups—especially Negroes.

We have publicly proclaimed our equal opportunity

policy, intensified our search for minority group employees, contacted minority groups for their aid in finding potential employees, and created a new position of Human Relations Coordinator to give further impetus to our entire program.

As an employer, Bank of America is willing to take suggestions from any individual or any group—public or private. In the case of the demands made by CORE, many had long been in effect. Others we have adopted, and as a result, the spirit as well as the letter of CORE's reasonable suggestions have been met.

Bank of America is deeply concerned with the social problem of equal opportunity and keenly aware of its responsibility to help achieve a solution.

But to submit to policing under the threats of a pressure group is dangerous in principle and violates the sense of justice and fairness which all Americans share.

Bank of America *cannot* and *will not* allow itself to be policed by any nongovernment agency. And CORE—by insisting on permanently policing one of California's major financial institutions—is in effect usurping powers that belong only to the government itself.

We thank the many thousands of California citizens, both Negro and white, who have telephoned and written to us commending us on our stand. We are sure we can depend on the continued support of the citizens of this state in our firm determination not to capitulate to the unreasonable demands of a pressure group for masses of statistical data.

We apologize to any of our customers who have been inconvenienced by the picketing which has taken place.

As most of you know, the Governor publicly implored CORE leaders last Friday to call off their scheduled demonstrations as a sign of their good faith. We are sure that all responsible citizens share our outrage at the manner in which CORE has so cynically disregarded an effort by the people's chosen chief executive to act as a conciliator.

### BANK OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRUST AND SAVINGS ASSOCIATION • MEMBER FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION