

TO: Mr. Richard Haley, Director of Southern Office  
Mr. Spiver Gordon, Field Secretary, North Florida  
Mr. C. McCain, Department of Organization

FROM: Stuart Wechsler, CORE Task Force, Florida

DATE: March 15, 1965

SUBJECT: Field report for Liberty and Gadsden Counties March 1- 15

#### GADSDEN COUNTY

SCHOOL DESEGREGATION: The Gadsden County desegregation plan is of the Volunteer Pupil Placement type that has so many whereases and conditions that if allowed to stand unchallenged will maintain segregation in all county schools. Children desiring to transfer must take a series of tests, if they come within a certain percentage they are permitted to transfer..... if the school of their choice is not overcrowded and transportation facilities are adequate (re. present segregated facilities).

Meetings have been held by the school board to explain their side of the story to the teachers and parents. Max Walker, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, avoids most of the pertinent questions. Apparently there are no plans for the integration of the teaching staff.

We have planned a series of meetings throughout the county to explain what the plan really means. We are also letting people know that there is a lawyer, John Due, who would be willing to represent them in a suit against the county.

ANTI\*- POVERTY: A meeting was held by the Temporary Anti-Poverty Committee March 8, 1965. Representatives from all the white communities were present (geographically speaking) plus representatives from CIG and the Negro Business and Civic League. Neither Crutcher nor Evans, head of the Negro Business and Civic Group notified Core of the meeting. John Due went as a representative of CIG at Crutchers request. Johnny Watson and myself attended the meeting. We were allowed to remain for about fifteen minutes at which point the chairman (John Snipes) asked us to leave since it was a closed meeting. We explained that CORE desired to be allowed to stay since we felt that the program was a public one and therefore the meetings should be opened to the public and all interested groups. John Due suggested that we be allowed to remain until such time as it would be necessary to close the meeting. No one spoke up for this suggestion. The whites were very adamant about making us leave and the Negro representatives did not back us up at all. I stated that we were making a formal protest at our exclusion and that we wanted it included in the minutes.

The following day Spiver and I went to see Snipes. He was very courteous and tried to explain why we were not allowed into the meeting. After a while he agreed to allow Spiver to sit in at the next meeting, he specified Spiver and indicated by his actions

that he definitely did not want me.

Rev. Campbell of Stevens Elementary School ( the principal) also contacted Snipes and induced him to accept three representatives from the PTA at the next meeting.

The impression that I have about Snipes is that he is sincere but not too bright. He appears to be manipulated by Maxwell and the other more aggressive whites. Evans and his group have the reputation of being a bunch of Toms, they are ~~at~~ called upon often by the county and city commissioners to act as go betweens for the Negro community, so it seems that ~~we~~ they will be nothing but rubber stamps.

Crutcher is more complex. He is militant but for some reason or other he is avoiding CORE. He does not keep us informed as to ~~when~~ when any meetings are being held.

No poor people are ~~represented~~ represented on the committee and there is nothing to indicate that present members of the committee wish to see poverty stricken people of any race included in the the planning stage of the program. Rev. Crutcher is the only member who even mentioned it.

March 16, another meeting is being held. However this time Spiver and Rev. Campbell will be there.

VOTER REGISTRATION: The city books were opened the ninth of March in preparation for an election on the 13th of April. The books will be opened only two weeks. Rev. Campbell might run for the office of city commissioner. Any registered voter is eligible for candidacy with a petition of 25 registered voters

We have been canvassing Quincy, contacting approximately 800 people. We cannot get an accurate count of the number of people registered due to a staff shortage. There was a line outside of the registrars office on the 15th. Transportation is not being provided in many cases due to the proximity of the City Hall and lack of time in which to canvass.

#### LIBERTY COUNTY

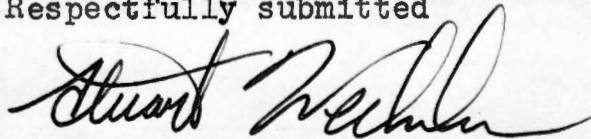
VOTERS LEAGUE: The vast majority of the members of the Voter's league consider the present ~~president~~ president overbearing and ~~despicable~~ despicable. In addition there is some friction between the moderates of the League headed by Mrs. Jones ( the president) and the more militant faction of the group. Mrs. Jones is opposed to testing restaurants and is also hesitant about pressing suit for school integration. Many people have taken the view that if she remains in the organization they would leave it. The next meeting they hold will probably bring the whole situation to a head.

ANTI-POVERTY: A committee was appointed by the V.L. to start work on the anti-poverty plan. I am to meet with it the week of the 20th. It is doubtful as to whether the county could start a plan by itself due to its small size and we will probably have to work with

an adjoining county.

SCHOOL DESEGRGATION: Conditions at the Negro school in Liberty County are deplorable. It is a small school with only 140 pupils and eight teachers. 250 books in the library, no equipment in the science room, limited number of subjects (no language other than video Spanish for 1st through 3rd graders) and overcrowded busses. A committee has also been formed for the purpose of desegregation by the V.L.. Parents of forty children have already retained John Due to sue the county to bring about a true integration plan

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stuart Wechsler".

Stuart Wechsler