

January 8, 1965

Dear NAC Member:

There have been an number of disturbing developments and events which have occurred in the last few months which raise serious questions about the continued viability of National CORE. I have been asked by nine members of the NAC to call a Steering Committee meeting for January. Unfortunately, the National Director will be in Africa on a good will tour for the month of January, but it is believed that the NAC or its Steering Committee must come to grips with these problems immediately if the decline of the organization is to be prevented.

If you agree that the problems outlined are serious ones and worthy of discussion at a special meeting of the Steering Committee scheduled for January 16-17, we urge you to respond in the appropriate space. As you know, there has been no meeting of the Steering Committee since October. We feel that such a meeting must take place this month if full benefit is to be derived from the NAC meeting scheduled for February.

National CORE is clearly in a state of financial crisis. We therefore ask that members of the Steering Committee assess themselves \$100 each in order that transportation to the meeting can be provided for all who can come that weekend. This money should be borrowed if possible from local chapters with the understanding that the National office will repay it as soon as it is again financially solvent. The suggested meeting place for the meeting is New York **at** the National CORE office, starting 9:30 a.m. Jan 16.

We firmly believe in the potential of a well-organized, mass-based organization and seek the accomplishment of that end. We also believe that as a member of the NAC we have a responsibility to see that the course toward that end is well-chartered. We hope you will join us in this effort.

Please respond by return mail, air mail special delivery.

Sincerely yours,

Floyd McKissick, National Chairman

PROBLEMS

1. Lack of Communication Article X, Section 5 of the CORE Constitution states that the NAC shall be the governing body of CORE between conventions. It is our feeling that the lack of communication from the National office has made it impossible for the NAC to effectively discharge its responsibility. Since the last NAC meeting in October only three communications from the office have been received by NAC members--two of these were postponements and one was an outline of our financial situation. There has been no communication which indicated what was going on in any of our departments, what staff had been doing nor any discussion of progress on problems in areas of special interest such as Miss., Louisiana or Chicago. We have still not received copies of the National Director's statement at Nyack, outlining proposed direction and goals for the organization.

2. Two major policy decisions have been made to sharply reduce the operation of our projects in Mississippi and Chicago. Certainly various retrenchments in the activity of the national organization become necessary at such a critical junction. However, it becomes inexcusable for two decisions with such far-reaching consequences to CORE to be made without reference to the NAC about the development of such a financial crisis in the first place and the value and necessity of specific retrenchments in program which the NAC has authorized.

It becomes more and more clear that the failure of department heads to keep the NAC informed on regular basis makes it impossible for the NAC to make any sound policy decisions.

3. The inadequacy of staff at a national level has had embarrassing and discouraging repercussions for local chapters. Many of us have experienced the frustration of sending letters upon letters to the national office which have remained unanswered. We were plagued by calls of upset persons this Christmas who neither received their CORE Christmas cards nor any communication regarding them. We have often discovered to our dismay that persons working on a local level had more grasp and understanding of CORE's program than national personnel. Furthermore, we are not satisfied with either the community relations nor the fund-raising jobs done by the national office and believe that a separation of these functions is clearly in order. It is also not clear whether or not directives from the NAC regarding the staff changes have been carried out.

4. CORE's failure to participate meaningfully with the other civil rights groups on the challenge to the Miss. Congressional delegation is certainly a subject for discussion. The telegram sent out by the national director in the last few days of the campaign underscores the default

information could have still been sent out early enough to be of value for less expense. There is a continuing need for more direction in the area of program for local chapters.

5. At the August Steering Committee meeting a committee was appointed to draw up plans for a national training institute for urban staff and chapter personnel. The committee made a preliminary report in Sept. and a final one in late November. In spite of the fact that the institute was designated as a top priority need for Northern chapters there has been no action taken on it as yet; in fact, there has not even been an acknowledgement of the receipt of the plans. Similarly, there has been no in depth training of old or new staff although the need for such has often been expressed. This lack of response cannot be attributed to lack of money alone although that is obviously an important factor. The failure to find the money for this important purpose points up again the need for a full-time fund-raiser.

6. While we believe that there is general consensus in CORE that it is important to have close and meaningful relations with the new African nations, it is our feeling that a trip away from the country of a month duration, while the organization is going through a crisis period is a policy decision of the first order. Nonetheless no mention of this proposed trip was made at the last NAC meeting in October. To our knowledge there was no formal announcement of this trip before a memo to the NAC dated December 30, 1964, the eve of Mr. Farmer's departure. This precluded any discussion of the advisability of the trip at this time as well as the possibility of modifying the schedule in such a way as to have a NAC meeting before Feb. 1965.

Based upon this discussion, we suggest that the following items be placed on the agenda for the proposed Steering Committee meeting, January 16, 1965 in New York at the CORE office, 38 Park Row starting at 9:30 a.m.

1. Plans for the National CORE Convention
2. That much more information be made available to the NAC about persons being considered for openings so that intelligent decisions in line with the NAC's responsibilities in hiring (see Article XIV, Section 3) can be made.
3. That the RAC be recognized as a significant level of organization and be recognized as a significant level of organization and be strengthened and encouraged in every way possible. That the Dept. of Organization set up again the regional conferences that were discontinued last year and make its resources available to the RAC's for their organization and development.
4. That the NAC set up priorities for the allocation of funds and another set of priorities for cut-backs when they become necessary. It is our

further recommendation that the training institute be given top priority in the plans for new expenditures.

5. The serious absence of direction for program reflects the need for a program assistant in the department of Organization. Every effort should be made to fill this position as soon as possible.
 6. That the fund-raising and community relations departments should be separated. A committee of the NAC and staff was appointed to study the question of fund-raising nation-wide August 8 and 9. This committee should either be vitalized or abolished.
 7. The Dept. of Finance shall submit monthly statements of income and expenditures in addition to monthly budget projections for income and expenses to NAC members and key staff personnel. The Dept. of Organization shall submit monthly reports to NAC members on all national regional and chapter projects authorized by the NAC. Activity and plans for staff recruitment and training, as well as chapter servicing will be included in this report.
 8. That the Associate Director also submit monthly reports and note in them the disposition of all directives from NAC to staff.
 9. That minutes of staff meetings be promptly sent to NAC members and key staff personnel.
- by the National Director
10. That in the future no extended trips be planned outside the country without prior approval of the NAC or its Steering Committee