



to abolish racial discrimination by direct, nonviolent methods

SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

2965 Imperial Avenue
San Diego, California

January 1, 1965

San Diego City Council
City Hall
San Diego, California

Dear Council Members:

Last summer those of us in CORE heard repeated protestations of sympathy from Mayor Frank Curran on the CORE aims of correction of racial injustices and institution of equal employment opportunity. While threatening police power if our protests grew too clamorous, he assured us that proper use of legal channels would always result in fair hearing and the full weight of city government being brought to bear on the side of racial justice. We wish this were true and have not lost faith that it can be made true, but we must admit that the following chronicle of events has been rather disheartening.

In early September, CORE contacted Dr. C. R. Schroeder, Director, San Diego Zoological Garden, posting him on charges of racial bias in hiring practices at the Zoo and shocking working conditions, particularly for female Negro employees. CORE asked for nothing more than an opportunity to discuss these allegations but was rebuffed. A second letter from CORE giving some details on the Zoo's hiring record and the working conditions of some Negro employees at the Zoo brought only denial and a second refusal to meet for discussion. In its third letter to Dr. Schroeder, CORE underscored the fact that it was authorized to speak for the pitifully few Negroes employed by the Zoo. It also asked why any group of well-meaning citizens should be denied an opportunity to discuss personnel policies with Zoo officials. After long delay, this letter was answered by a third rebuff from Dr. Schroeder. It should be noted here that in all correspondence, CORE was careful to keep fully informed and offered to work with the following offices and agencies:

Mr. Bud Place, Mayor's Office
Mr. James Barham, Teamster's Union Local 481
Mr. Dumas Robinson, Fair Employment Practices Commission
Mr. John Johnson, Urban League
Dr. Carroll Waymon, Citizens Interracial Council

When these reasonable requests for discussion were categorically denied by the Director of the Zoological Garden, CORE then turned to the San Diego City Council to ask for its intercession to arrange for discussion between Zoo officials and representatives of CORE

as well as all other interested agencies. Since the Zoo is on city owned property and since Ordinance #6605 does provide for allocation of city tax monies to the Zoological Garden, it seemed proper to ask the City Council to use its good office to arrange for the much-desired but thrice-refused meeting. CORE asked for a place on the December 22nd City Council agenda to make this simple request for intercession. Inquiry at the last moment revealed that CORE was not on the agenda and that its letter of request had been shuttled between the Office of the Mayor and the Office of the City Clerk.

The Congress of Racial Equality refuses to be discouraged, for we know that the victorious struggle for racial justice will be a long and painful one. By this letter, we return to you once more, not asking that you solve this problem, but simply that you use your privileged position of prestige and authority to request that Zoo officials show responsibility and good will by agreeing to meet with CORE and other interested agencies.

We shall await your early answer.

Respectfully,

Harold K Brown, Chairman
San Diego Chapter CORE

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cc: Mr. Bud Place
Mr. James Barham
Mr. Dumas Robinson
Mr. John Johnson
Dr. Carroll Gaymon