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318



O. LEEDS

*"Here is the manliness of manhood
that a man has a good reason for
what he does, and has a will in
doing it."*

A. Maclaren

To the man called Farmer
who's "all wool and a yard wide."

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The Northeastern Region of the Congress of Racial Equality is privileged to have the opportunity to pay tribute to a great man, — a tribute that can only be a token of our esteem for his invaluable contribution of many years of unselfish devotion, and his total commitment to the cause of social justice.

James Farmer was born in Marshall, Texas, January 12, 1920, the son of a scholar and the grandson of a slave.

After earning a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry at 18, he enrolled in the School of Religion at Howard University. He received the degree of Bachelor of Divinity in 1941. But with a courage that was soon to become his hallmark, he *declined* ordination, stating that he could not honestly preach the Gospel of Christ in a church that practiced discrimination.

While not abandoning his teachings, he turned his energies toward social action.

In 1942, on the campus of the University of Chicago, he organized the first CORE Chapter. The group intended he said to substitute "bodies for exhortations," and to apply to the struggle for Racial equality in the United States the techniques of nonviolence and passive resistance that Gandhi used so successfully in India's struggle for independence.

Though not as old as some of the other organizations, CORE captured the imagination of the young people who in turn gave impetus to The Movement.

As national director of CORE, James Farmer not only planned projects but he also led demonstrations fearlessly and undauntedly putting his life in jeopardy.

With the original Freedom Riders, he was imprisoned for 40 days in 1961. Again, in August, 1963, he was jailed for leading a demonstration in Plaquemine, Louisiana. And on August 22, 1964 he, with 300 others was arrested at the World's Fair protesting segregation and discrimination of many of the state exhibits.

In the summer of 1965 in Bogalusa, Louisiana, he was again at the vanguard in one of the bloodiest, most brutal demonstrations since the struggle began.

In that same year, Morgan State College bestowed upon this worthy man the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities.

Mr. Farmer's decision to resign from "a secure lifetime base" for something both untried and unknown has required great personal courage and the decision was made only after long deliberation and soul searching.

We in CORE who have worked with him and have come to rely upon his sound judgment, and enormous strength of character are naturally saddened by his departure. He has long been an advocate of the theory that "something new" is needed to maintain the momentum and cohesiveness of the groups struggling for equality. We are proud that he has undertaken this task.

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FLOYD Mc KISSICK, Esq.

We of CORE were overwhelmed with jubilation to learn that our governing body, the National Action Council had chosen Floyd Mc Kissick to fill the void that had come about with the news of the departure of Mr. Farmer. The anxiety, the emptiness that had momentarily besieged us was supplanted by new enthusiasm and hope for the future of our great organization. For in Floyd Mc Kissick are the sterling qualities that are uncommon indeed. A more erudite, judicious, inviolable and dedicated man could not have been found. He is an old warrior in the Civil Rights movement with an established history of militancy and deeply committed to the goal of total equality. CORE is blessed.



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I have been greatly assisted in the preparation for this affair.

I wish to thank Herb Callender of National office and Jim Williams of Philadelphia CORE for their patience and understanding through the past trying weeks.

To Mrs. Shirley Lacy of Englewood, N. J., Mr. Jim McDonald of National office, Mr. James W. Hawk and J. Weldon Greene of Washington, D. C. my deep appreciation for sharing with me your expertness in affairs of this nature.

I am indebted to Margarita Patterson, Marva Dates, Sharon Bouldin and Faith Dougherty of Baltimore CORE for relinquishing part of their New Year holiday to assist with the mailing of invitations to Jim and Cardriene Griffin, a special thanks for opening their home to me. Even to their daughter Cheryl 5, who was so proud to be "helping Civil Rights." I was amused to overhear Cheryl chiding her younger sister Debbie because she wasn't doing anything but "getting in the way." "She's too young," I said, rushing to Debbie's defense. Cheryl paused for a moment as if respecting my seniority. She however replied after not too long a hesitation, "Shucks, she can at least hand people things."

To Miss Nancy Steadman of National office I express my gratitude for her invaluable assistance in the preparation of the brief biography of Mr. Farmer.

Also Miss Fran Crayton and Miss Barbette Cole are to be thanked for the hospitality shown me while in New York.

Tom Lewis of Baltimore is to be lauded for the impressive cover of this journal.

Thanks also goes to Dave Eberhardt of Baltimore, Robin Standish, Ann Relyea, Marilyn Outlaw, Joan Bacchus, Delores Coleman, Jeanne Walton, Marion and Dan Ingram, Thirlee Smith, Arthur Tardy and John Stewart of Washington CORE, my appreciation for submitting names of friends and relatives, many of whom are present this evening. And a very special thanks to Tom Yeager for many things.

There has been an excellent show of inter-chapter cooperation. For without the help of these and others, this event would never have been.

My sincere gratitude to all of you and I hope that the lessons learned from this venture will serve us well in the future.



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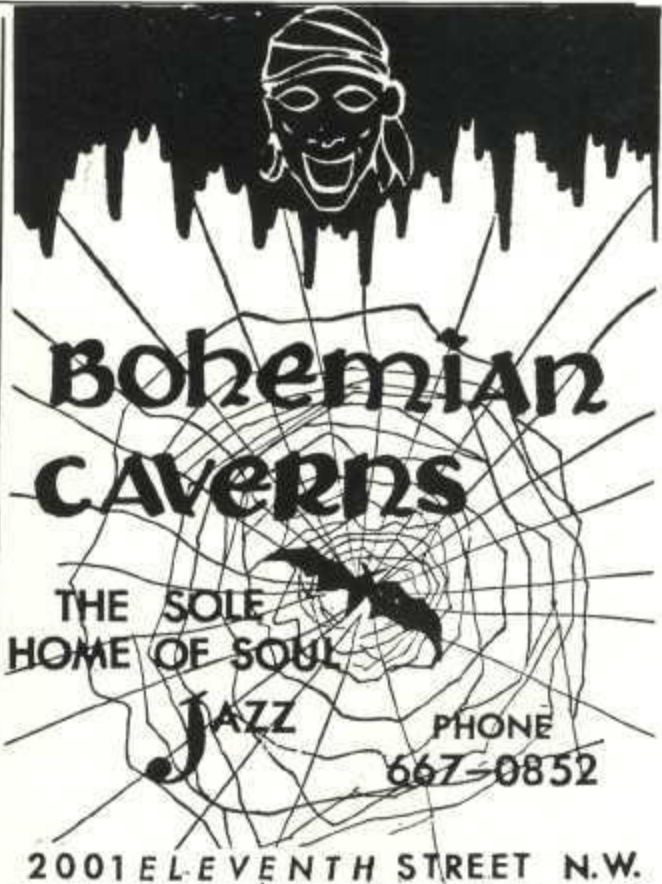
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"There is no ending in sight"

I have expended my entire life in the struggle for human dignity, especially as that struggle concerns colored Americans. Neither my commitment to the struggle nor my active involvement in it will be affected by my change of jobs.

We are in the middle of this terrible storm, this continuing tragedy of racial hatred, and poverty and pain . . . there is no ending in sight and I have quite simply chosen to seek that ending from another place.

* * * * *

THE TASK of the Center for Community Action — Education is an extension of, not a diversion from, the struggle that sustains me. Those of us involved in the civil rights movement are not surprised by rumors that the movement is faltering. We recognize such rumors as another manifestation of an extremely sad fact of American life: There are those who would rather see a problem vanish than deal with it.

Unfortunately, there are some who equate CORE'S entire program and purpose with demonstrations and direct action. If we aren't in the streets, they conclude that CORE is dead. It seems that those people become most uncomfortable when their creation, the "invisible man," momentarily moves from their vision.

Those who hold such a view are, perhaps unwittingly, engaging in a particularly vicious form of racism. For to conclude that the colored American is incapable of adapting his press for freedom to new circumstances is to conclude that we are essentially different from other humans. That has been a characteristic of racism and it will always be so.

* * * * *

ANY STRUGGLE against long-standing resistance initially aims at a single point, often using a single weapon. That principle of economy of force

applies to all struggles. But as the tide begins to turn in favor of the attacker, broader areas are brought under fire by more sophisticated weaponry.

CORE and I began in this struggle as activists. The commitment to direct action has served us well in the past and we will use it with even greater effect in the future. It remains a key weapon. But now CORE has broadened its operational area.

The political power of colored Americans is one of our major and long-term goals; CORE will use the methods of its choosing to realize that objective. The black ghetto is awakening, and CORE, in city after city, is organizing for action in that community.

Economic power, gained through full — participation in a skill — oriented job market is an equally important goal; CORE will address itself to that question, again using the weapons it deems practical.

* * * * *

BUT WHILE the ghetto — trapped and brutalizing black American of the North is fighting to make his place in a complex urban setting, his brothers and sisters in the rural South continue to suffer economic oppression.

Agricultural workers, now largely colored, are second-class citizens; denied their country's protection of collective bargaining and minimum wage laws. CORE'S concern is presently demonstrated by our involvement supporting striking vineyard workers against Schenley and other growers in California.

The vitality of CORE has never been one single individual; it has been the dedication of thousands of Americans, black and white, who accept the fact that their action can improve their country.

(Dr.) JAMES FARMER