

## SECTION XIV

### SOCIAL ACTION AFFAIRS VICE PRESIDENT: REPORT

#### I. PURPOSE

Social Action, designating almost every interaction of human beings has, of necessity, been given a more restricted meaning as applied to this division. This division concentrates in three interrelated fields - Family Life, Industrial Relations, and Human Relations.

Generally speaking, this division attempts to paint a picture of "social life" in a specific area - to focus attention on undesirable practices therein - and to solicit Federationwide action to transform this "social picture" into a more Christian setting.

The division can only present a situation and make suggestions; only the NFCCS member can improve the situation.

#### II. ACTIVITIES

Interregional Conferences: The concept of an interregional conference was concretized in the form of the Penta-Regional Conference (New York - New Jersey, Baltimore-Washington, Lake Erie, Philadelphia, and New England Regions). This Manhattanville-sponsored project attracted representation from each of the aforementioned regions. Favorably impressed delegates attested to the merit of such a transregional affair. Complimentary letters from the Catholic Interracial Council of New York, the Catholic Interracial Council of Chicago, the New York State Commission against Discrimination, etc. acknowledged this event to be a recognizable success beyond NFCCS boundaries.

A second multi-regional congregation, sponsored by the Ohio-Kentucky Region and hosted by St. Mary of the Springs College was held on February 18 at the Fort Hayes Hotel in Columbus, Ohio. Substantial representation was had from the Ohio-Kentucky and Pittsburgh-Cleveland Regions, whereas the distance factor proved prohibitive to Central Midwest participation. Sue Guter's (O-K regional president) initiative, coupled with O-K support destined this to be a successful undertaking.

A similar effort planned for the San Francisco and Los Angeles Regions was never carried out because of more pressing internal regional problems. Plans also failed to materialize when the Catholic Interracial Council of Chicago announced that it could not co-sponsor (NFCCS and Newman) its annual human relations conference - partly because of its internal reorganization.

Social Action Booklets: As basic resource material, the Social Action Affairs Secretariat published a series of eight booklets which were circulated among delegates at the Congress in Louisville. These booklets were designed to acquaint the student with many facets of interracial problems. A selected bibliography was included for concentrated study in a specific area. One booklet contained a comprehensive listing of human relations agencies for request and research purposes.

NFCCS and non-NFCCS requests quickly depleted the supply, subsequently necessitating a reprinting. (Copies are now available at 50¢ each.) Delegates who have not procured this series from their predecessors are strongly urged to purchase this set. Three new booklets will be available for Congress delegates at no cost. There remains no doubt as to the high quality and adequacy of these publications.

Interracial Justice Week Kits: In early March these kits were mailed to Federation personnel. They contained: (1) Prayer to St. Benedict for Interracial Charity, (2) discussion guide for the film: "Burden of Truth," (3) news release on NAACP from the Catholic Interracial Council, (4) Bishops' Statement: Discrimination and the



Catholic Conscience, (5) Answers to most asked questions about Negroes, (6) publicity posters for Interracial Justice Week, and (7) list of current booklets available at the secretariat.

These kits were intended to direct attention to the existence of this week and to offer suggested means of observance. Many replies confirmed this goal had been attained with moderate success.

Mailings:

1. A letter was sent to each student government president within the Federation including a copy of both resolutions which were adopted at the October human relations conference. The first of these resolutions called upon all Catholic college graduates to become active members of the civic community by founding or joining community councils to bring together peoples of different races, nationalities, cultures to work for whatever is of importance to human welfare in the neighborhood. The second resolution expressed support of the measures taken by the National Urban League to counteract the harmful effects of the Suitcase Home Bill passed by the Louisiana State Legislature. The secretariat requested that, if possible, either or both of these resolutions be discussed in a student assembly and that financial contributions be made on behalf of the latter.
2. The secretariat requested and received information concerning the activities of the organization known as the Catholic Scholarships for Negroes, Inc. In turn, we requested that this organization be supported by NFCCS member colleges.
3. A letter was sent to each senior delegate within the Federation concerning Dr. Martin Luther King's participation in the student sit-ins in Atlanta, and his subsequent imprisonment. In view of his legal position, it was decided by representatives of many of the national student and young adult organizations who met at the New York headquarters of the NAACP to request Governor Vandiver of Georgia, the two candidates for the presidency and President Eisenhower to exert their moral leadership in demanding equitable treatment under the law for Dr. King. Under the authorization of NFCCS President, Thomas Geil and NNCF President, William Hansell, these two organizations co-signed, together with representatives of NSA, SDS, and the Afro-American Cultural League, telegrams to the above mentioned persons. Copies of these telegrams were sent to senior delegates.
4. Information concerning the proposed civil rights demonstrations to be held on election day was also sent to each college. This letter was intended to stimulate college students to publicize to voters the present injustices suffered by Negroes. A sample handbill contained recommendations by the Civil Rights Commission and was to be displayed at voting polls.
5. A request for letters of protest to be sent to Alabama Governor, John Patterson, showing disapproval at his failure to protect the Freedom Riders was mailed to all delegates. This request was accompanied by a folder explaining and enlisting aid for Operation Freedom.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: In compliance with the mandate of the XVII National Congress, the resolutions of the Congress on the sit-ins and the NAACP were publicized extensively. It should be noted that many human relations organizations were surprised and pleased that the Federation had taken a stand on these issues. The mandate also urged the Social Action Affairs division to publicize the aims and objectives of the NAACP. This was given a thorough treatment. The secretariat procured some 250 packets containing a wealth of information on this organization and distributed these pamphlets to senior delegates.

Current Events Bulletin: At the conclusion of each semester, the secretariat issued



a current events bulletin. This bulletin is primarily intended to summarize pertinent human relations events occurring during the previous semester with a special emphasis on delineating trends as detected from these happenings. The first such bulletin, "The Social Action News Notes," was excellent content-wise, but lacked a good format. The second bulletin, "The Social Action Summary," maintained a high quality content along with an improved format.

Industrial Relations Issue: As requested by this officer, the Canisius College Industrial Relations Academy published a booklet to commemorate the anniversary of the two great encyclicals, Rerum Novarum and Quadragesimo Anno. At no cost to the Federation, ample copies will be available at the Congress. Many competent Industrial Relations men have highly praised this work.

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee: In response to student interest in the SNCC, this officer has received permission from the SNCC officers to reprint some of their publications which would describe the philosophy, history, and organization of this organization. It is hoped that these reprints will be available at the Congress.

### III. PROBLEM AREAS

This is a somewhat awkward term and I will only mention a few items not covered under other headings.

Mailings: A rather crippling occurrence was that several campuses had received no secretariat mailings during the entire first semester. Though this was a mechanical failure, the fact should have been brought to the attention of the divisional vice president much earlier. As it happened, many campuses, of necessity, were unable to participate in the program.

Catholic Interracial Council of Chicago: Though this officer had counted heavily on their co-sponsoring a human relations conference, they did not come through. A key reason was NFCCS poor participation in previous years. This officer hopes that his successor will be able to co-sponsor this event with the CICC because of their excellent programming assistance. To do this, the backing of the Federation must be guaranteed - especially from the North Central Region.

Utilization of Materials: Because the present secretarial system lacks a formal reporting system, it is difficult to ascertain the utilization of secretariat materials. The only gauge is letters from delegates expressing their like or dislike of such. I would strongly urge delegates to drop a line to the Social Action Affairs Vice President informing him of what is happening to secretariat materials.

### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Social Action Affairs Division continue its concentration in the human relations field with additional attention on non-Negro minority groups for the 1961-62 program.

In regard to interregional conferences:

That the Social Action Affairs Vice President immediately contact presidents of the New York - New Jersey, Philadelphia, New England, Lake Erie, and Baltimore-Washington regions to secure more participation at the Penta Regional Conference.

That the Social Action Affairs Vice President make plans with the Ohio-Kentucky regional president for the re-sponsorship of the Tri Regional Conference.

That attempts be made to hold an interregional conference in the Los Angeles - San Francisco area.



That the Social Action Affairs Vice President study possibilities for other such affairs among remaining regions.

That the Social Action Affairs Vice President make immediate negotiations with the CICC and the president of the North Central Region, Newman Club officers for a re-sponsorship of the Annaul Human Relations Conference. This should remain a primary objective.

That the Social Action Affairs Secretariat issue the "Social Action Summary" with greater frequency (3 - 5 times per year) and that this bulletin be given an enhanced and standard format.

That the Social Action Affairs Division issue, in booklet, bulletin, or pamphlet form, a factual background study of US non-Negro minority groups.

That the Social Action Affairs Vice President attempt a unified Federationwide activity to observe Interracial Justice Week. (This could very well be in the form of a Mass for interracial peace on all Federation campuses on the same day.) This officer is certain of an overwhelming effect of such an activity.

That the Social Action Affairs Vice President working closely with the secretariat immediately prepare for the 1962-63 program - and the focus be industrial relations. Contact should be made with the NAM, AFL-CIO, and Chamber of Commerce for materials and programming assistance.

That the Social Action Affairs Secretariat be reseated at Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart for the 1961-62 year.

#### V. EVALUATION

This report has contained a detailed account of the Social Action Affairs Secretariat's activities. To evaluate is somewhat redundant. The staff at Manhattanville - especially Lani Phelan, Ann Hesterberg, Loretta Summerville, and Mother Clark (secretariat moderator) - have worked diligently and have produced high caliber publications. This work has had an originality which is difficult to achieve in such a "popular" field.

The formats of many mailings have left something to be desired but this is more of a financial problem than one of neglect.

Several trouble spots this year can be attributed to this being a year of experimentation and will undoubtedly be ironed out with the experience gained. In a word, the secretariat has completed a commendable task - beyond this officer's idealistic expectations.

My thanks go to Lani Phelan, Mother Clark and the Manhattanville staff for their fine work - making my duties much easier than otherwise. I would like to thank Rev. Charles Kerrigan of Canisius College for his help, and finally, the officers of "Club Canada" for giving me one semester's free office space.

Respectfully submitted,

Fred Attea

Social Action Affairs Vice President