

**A MOVEMENT AGAINST RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
(in the Champaign-Urbana-University of Illinois area)**

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**November 25, 1953
Social Movements 340**

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In 1946, during the time when there were many war veterans on the University of Illinois campus, some of them became uneasy about the discrimination they saw in their midst. They soon began thinking that something had to be done--for this wasn't what they had fought so hard for. Finally several of them got together, enlisted the aid of some faculty members and of various ministers in the community and formed an organization.

At this time the Champaign Urbana community was known to have much "Jim Crow" feeling. Neither restaurants, movie theaters, housing, nor barbershops would serve Negroes. Yet, there were many people who were intelligently open-minded enough to see that this bigotry was in direct conflict with our professed American way of life.

This movement, unlike Topsy, didn't just grow. From almost the very beginning it was organized quite formally and did nearly all of its work in light of that organization, which they called the STUDENT-COMMUNITY INTERRACIAL COMMITTEE, or S-CIC.

The objective of this movement is to do all in its power to end racial discrimination on the campus and in the community. This is to be done by contacting those people using discriminatory practices and pointing out their wrong-doing, presenting educational information and meetings, and picketing or taking legal action when necessary.

The movement began in 1946 with the organization of the S-CIC and has continued until the present, though there has been considerable change of organization within the movement. The area involved is the Champaign-Urbana-University of Illinois campus area in its entirety. However, other communities and organizations have been very much aware of this movement, e.g.--Springfield, Chicago (many news write-ups) and the readers of the Methodist "Motive" magazine and the Unitarian "Youth for Action" magazine.

Because of the number of students and faculty members that come and go in a community of this sort, it is very difficult to even guess the number of participants in the movement. The bulk of participants are, and always have been, students, faculty members, ministers and some Negroes of the community. Membership is open to anyone in the area and, actually, a person need not be a member of any of the organizations to actively participate. If one is interested in a project, he may work on it and then leave the movement when he desires.

The "ordinary" citizen--the grocery clerk, the garbage collector, the mechanic, the laborer, has never been active in the movement. Also, he has never been encouraged by any of the organizations to become active.

The Negro, as a participant, has fluctuated often from intense activity to weary apathy at being focused in the spotlight.

In the beginning, early 1946, there was a general feeling of unrest among a few veterans. Then they began talking the situation over, but with no definite plan to give them a cohesive force. This was the milling stage. Upon wisely enlisting the aid of faculty members and other professional people of the community, they entered the organized stage with the formation of the S-CIC. This organization worked long and hard toward its goal of racial non-discrimination in the community until 1950 when there was a split within the organization over tactics and policy.

The split and how it was resolved offers an excellent example of interaction within a movement. The great majority of participants in S-CIC was conservative. But there were eight or ten "radicals" who did not hesitate to make their presence felt. These "radicals" demanded any type action be taken to end discrimination. (Our source of information at one time called them "these bomb-throwers" and at another time, "the Mau-Maus.") The clash between the two elements came to a head in a controversy involving the Elmwood Skating Rink in Urbana. The internal strife reached such proportions as to cause the S-CIC to almost cease as a functioning organization.

The "radicals" demanded that the organization go into action against the rink to end the policy of discrimination there. The conservatives believed that because of the bad

reputation of the place (teenage drinking, a hang-out for pick-ups and amateur prostitution) there were other places that would be more beneficial to "go after" to end discrimination.

This argument dragged out until it became obvious that either drastic measures be taken or S-CIC would cease to function. Of only secondary importance, the Unitarian Church gave notice that unless they stopped the internal strife, they could no longer meet at the church.

Thus five of the conservatives got together and found all old members and many people who were interested, had them all join the organization, and then, after the membership went from about 30 to almost 120, all these new members voted to dissolve the organization. In other words, a purge was conducted by packing the meeting.

It has often been rumored that S-CIC was forced to disband because of infiltration by Communist elements. There is no foundation for such rumors. Upon the disorganization of a local AMERICAN YOUTH FOR DEMOCRACY organization (listed as red-front) a resolution was made to infiltrate S-CIC and gain control of it. But there is no evidence that this resolution was in any way carried out. The difficulties of S-CIC were internal and the difficulties were handled only by the members of S-CIC.

The STUDENT-COMMUNITY HUMAN RELATION COUNCIL was organized within a week of the dissolution of S-CIC and was made up of the conservative element of the S-CIC. It became active in the fall of 1951, but until the fall of 1952 it was on very shaky ground. At that time, largely through the efforts of one man, S-CHRC geared itself into action and has been quite unified and very active everysince.

The radical element from S-CIC held meetings for a time, but nothing ever developed from them.¹

In the constitution of S-CHRC a sincere effort was made to avoid the difficulties that had been encountered by S-CIC by inserting a membership clause in the constitution stating that any University of Illinois student or resident of Champaign-Urbana may be admitted to membership provided he, "wholeheartedly agree to the principles of the preamble."²

There are other organizations within the movement against discrimination. The STUDENT COMMITTEE ON DISCRIMINATION AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM (SCOLAF) began after a housing survey conducted by a student senator, Mr. Paramish Key, in 1950. His survey showed that only 7 out of every 20 university-approved houses practiced non-discriminatory practices. These results were

1. Source of strife and disbandment of S-CIC and birth of S-CHRC: Charles Shattuck, faculty, U. of I., member of both S-CIC and S-CHRC.

2. Constitution of S-CHRC, p. 3, article II, section 1.

the precipitating event for the organization of SCODAF. The organization contains many former members of S-CHRC who had become disgruntled with the conservative methods of the S-CHRC. There is no connection between SCODAF and S-CHRC. The latter organization keeps a polite distance, makes sure it doesn't have the same project and keeps watch over any possibility of overlapping of membership. SCODAF has been working on the housing project, but has had very few results.

This is a delimitation of a movement in a straight line; or nearly so. Yet there seem to be parallel movements or rather parallel organizations in the movement. The Y.M.C.A. has a committee that has been extremely active on the barber-shop discrimination problem.

The Student Senate also takes action on matters of discrimination.

Another small group sprang up just to try to tackle the barbershop question. It is significant that this group was made up of men from P.G.U., the units which housed the veterans several years earlier who began S-CIC.

We will make little mention of the Y-committee, the Student-Senate committees and legislation or the smaller groups which seem to be so short-lived, in the rest of our paper because, although they deal with our movement, they are really parts of other organizations, organized for a different purpose.

Very little has been said about the ideology of the movement or of actions and techniques.

The preamble to the constitution of the S-CHRC presents the ideology of the movement:

We, students and faculty members of the University of Illinois, and residents of Champaign county, recognize the danger of our community of discrimination among racial, religious, ethnic, or other culturally defined groups, and of the human tensions arising out of such differences. We further recognize the danger to our community from groups and persons motivated by totalitarian philosophies--such as fascist, race-supremist and communist--who foster discrimination and tension or use them to advance totalitarian ends.

We hereby establish the Constitution of the Student-Community Human Relations Council, and pledge ourselves to the work of helping to eliminate such discrimination and tension in Champaign County and at the University of Illinois. We pledge ourselves (1) to study carefully every reported case of discrimination, and (having determined it to be a valid case, prejudicial to the community and having weighed thoroughly the predictable effectiveness of the possible methods of action) to bring to bear upon it every appropriate moral, legal, and intellectual force within our power; (2) to combat all totalitarian influence in the area of intergroup relationships; and (3) to provide a strong and constant program of education for promoting better understanding and more enriching human relations among the diverse groups in our community.³

The first large project of the S-CIC was against discrimination of Negroes in restaurants. In May, 1946, a decision to picket six campus restaurants was made. Before this, there were attempts to change the opinions of the owners by discussion, by showing them pledges from other owners to serve

³ Ibid. p. 1, Preamble

all students equally, by presenting resolutions by campus groups against this practice of discrimination, and finally by preparing legal cases based on the Illinois constitution. The decision to picket was made because S-CIC felt that: 1, carefully planned picketing can effectively bring the issue to public attention; 2, the proper kind of picketing would create interest in the talk to be given the night of the demonstration; and 3, it would prove to the restaurant owners that customers disapproved to their policy.

Legal advice was obtained concerning picketing, the pickets were instructed, and Champaign-Urbana police were notified of the plans. June 4 and 7 were selected as dates. The restaurants to be picketed were Midwell's, Hagens Steak House, Skelton's Drugs, Steak and Shake, Todd's Cafe, and Steak and Shake Drive-in. S-CIC elected picket captains, and a call for pickets was made.

States Attorney Breece wrote letters to the six restaurants informing them that enough evidence had been gathered to bring legal action against them. The owners took no action on this so the pickets went ahead. It was later reported by the S-CIC newsletter that 90 students participated in peacefully picketing the six restaurants from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on June 4 and 7. Pickets did not hinder anyone from entering the restaurants except by bringing to their attention that "Jim Crow must go" and "Herb McKenley, Athlete of the Year, Can't Eat Here."

This initial picketing present the issue to the people, but produced no change in policy. Plans were made for further picketing during the summer session. Also, the Executive council of S-CIC conferred with the author of the Illinois Civil Rights Law to get grounds for legal action and a better understanding of the law. The President of the National Bar Association offered to present the case to the attorney general if the county did not act.

The summer picketing took place on July 23. By this time resolutions against discrimination had been passed by the Student Senate, Faculty Senate, MIA, VGS, Panhellenic, I-F Council, and fifty organized houses.

Plans for civil suits and a suit in the State Supreme Court were underway when five of the restaurants changed their policy on September 10, 1946. Bidwell's, the last to change, came around a few days later. The organization then turned to other work.⁴

S-CIC sent delegations to the Champaign and Urbana Police Departments to enlist their cooperation so that individual policemen would not be aiding discrimination by helping restaurant and theater managers foster discrimination. Also there was

⁴ On August 5, 1946 President Stoddard commended the S-CIC as follows: "I'm in full sympathy with the resolutions, glad that the students took the initiative in forming and acting upon the and that the faculty Senate endorsed them."

constant vigilance against any further discrimination in restaurants. Testing teams were an integral part of the discrimination detection technique. Four people are used, two white and two colored. Both enter the restaurant and later compare service. At other times larger mixed groups are used.

Also in this period protests were sent to President Truman and Attorney General Clark, about the many racial atrocities in the South, stating that they are a threat to democracy.

Petitions to oust Senator Bilbo were circulated at the last summer meeting.

"History of Ku Klux Klan," "Racial Discrimination in Journalism," and "The Psychology of the Majority" were some of the educational topics discussed.

In the fall of 1946, a motion was carried that S-CIC start work on discrimination in theaters of the Champaign-Urbana area. By November 19, 1946 an airtight case had been prepared against the Orpheum Theater. This was done after most of the theaters had refused to answer letters which S-CIC sent out.

To all appearances, the theaters are now cooperating in ending discrimination. Negroes are being urged to sit outside the old "Jim Crow" sections of the theaters. The manager of the Orpheum theater states that he has no formal

policy on seating Negroes. Negroes are being urged to sit on the main floor and white people are urged to sit in Negro sections. Anyone who encounters discrimination is urged to fill out an affidavit as these are very important in presenting a legal case.

S-CIC went ahead with other projects. A speakers bureau was set up to provide speakers for any group which wished to hear about S-CIC. The organization voted to send two delegates to the "People's Tribunal" where the plight of 400,000 Negro citizens of Chicago was discussed, and a legislative program was prepared for the coming session of the state legislature. The S-CIC inaugurated a campaign for canned goods and money for Christmas basket distributions for needy families in the Champaign-Urbana area.

The committee organized a project group to work on helping Douglas Community Center in the Negro neighborhood of Champaign. First suggestions were: 1, find out if the university will extend credit to Negro students who wished to work there; 2, see about surplus university athletic equipment; 3, inquire into the possibility of the YMCA working out an extension; 4, have petitions signed by townspeople for greater help for recreational facilities in the North end.

Early in March, 1947 a fifteen minute radio program was presented over WILL by S-CIC. Segregation in the University hospital was reported. Jess Turner said the hospital did

not discriminate. Delegates were sent to testify before the State Senate about S.C.C.

Although the S-CIC kept a constant watch on older projects (campus restaurants, theaters) it voted that clearing downtown restaurants of discrimination be their project for fall and winter, 1947-48. This was handled in much the same way as was the campus restaurant campaign.

A protest was made against minstrel shows when Gamma and Illinois Kanor planned one for Spring Carnival. After much publicity, both pro and con, the minstrel show was allowed to be presented (with a statement of sympathy for the Negro issued by Council of Student Affairs). Later in the year CSA did ban minstrel shows from the campus.

The S-CIC always had very good newspaper coverage in the Daily Illini and in the two local newspapers. Issues were brought before the public; developments of their work, and opposition to it were all made available through this media.

Handbills, letters, bulletins, flyers, etc. were used to publicize the action being taken and to notify citizens and students of new happenings. The S-CIC Weekly Newsletter was the official publication of the organization and it gave a report on all actions of the committee.

Activities of the organization all but ceased with the advent of internal strife as has been described earlier.

The S-CHRC was formed and it stated its objectives

to be the fostering of the best possible human relations in Champaign County and at the U. of I. "by helping to eliminate such discrimination among racial, religious, ethnic, or other culturally defined groups as may exist."

George Ansbery, community co-chairman stated, "Certainly one of our major objectives shall be to provide a strong and constant program of education for promoting better understanding and more enriching human relations among the diverse groups in our community."

A four-point plan was adopted as a means to this end:
1, effort to bring positive changes in intergroup attitudes;
2, cooperation with already established community and campus organizations; 3, educational work on intergroup problems;
and 4, gathering of factual material about campus and community affairs.

In January, 1952 a housing "who can live where" list was prepared. Work on I. P. C. was started and a survey of skills in the Negro community was made and turned over to the business men. Another Brotherhood week was celebrated.

In the fall of 1952 there was a big project of monthly Human Relations Workshops in collaboration with Hillel's interfaith committee.

In the spring of 1953 the YWCA committee started its work on the barbershop question and later asked S-C-C to

help. At the same time a small group of radicals broke away from S-CHRC and with others joined SCOLAF. The question of housing is in the hands of this organization.

To return to the barbershop question. It is a project going on right at the present time. The project was begun by the YWCA committee in the spring of 1953. It did not accomplish much that spring and this fall when it seemed bogged down, the S-CHRC stepped in to help with the project. Actually, it had kept in close contact with the Y-committee since the beginning of the project.

Another small group from the PCU housing sprang up (see p.6) with the famous "J.C. Caroline thrown for a loss" pamphlet. This pamphlet gives another excellent example of interrelations among the organizations of the movement. The S-CHRC saw the flyer before it was distributed. They liked it, but had no idea who had put it out. On a Friday night, the night before the flyer was to be distributed (at a football game) S-CHRC found the group. The group was in trouble. It did not have enough flyers printed and it did not have enough people to distribute the flyers that they did have. S-CHRC joined this group, printed up approximately 3,000 more flyers and provided people to distribute them.

Tests have been continually carried out. Negroes go into various barbershops and report on whether they received service.

Two more flyers were put out by S-CHRC. The Y-committee has concentrated upon conciliation and personal discussions with the campus barbers. The Daily Illini unequivocally is in favor of ending the discrimination of the barbershops. The Student Senate is considering a University barbershop.

The barbers still refuse to serve the Negro. In

The Nov. 24, 1953 Daily Illini reported that a Negro is bringing suit against the Campus Barber Shop. The Negro stated that on Oct. 24 he offered to pay the barber's fee and was refused service. The suit is based on chapter 30, section 125-128 of the Illinois Revised Statutes pertaining to racial discrimination. The section reads that "all persons are entitled to equal enjoyment of accommodation and that discrimination on account of race or color is prohibited."

The attorney for the plaintiff, Paul Edward Thurlow, Joliet, past state director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, met previously with the Y-committee and the executive board and legal action committee of S-CHRC. The S-CHRC is making funds available to the negro for court costs with the stipulation that if he wins the case the resulting damages will be given to charity.

The Daily Illini, in an editorial on Nov. 20, brought out the fact that the YACA sent a letter to President Morey on the day before the first barbershop flyers were distributed, disclaiming any connection with the leaflet passers. The newspaper

interpreted this act to mean an unfortunate presence of fraction among the organizations working on the barbershop problem. The editorial went on to urge that the various organizations get together and then make a unified approach to the problem.

The organizations (SACBHC, Y-committee, Student Senate) gave an answer to the editorial in a letter to the editor in the Nov. 24 issue of the Illini. They claimed that they were united in both aim and method. They said that such differences that may appear are differences of function--divisions of labor.

Thus, each in itself, is handling some approach to the problem and are all linked together by a common aim.

Is there a counter movement to this anti-discrimination movement? It might be said that there has been very little organized resistance. The main barrier to progress is the apparent indifference of "John Doe" to the problem. People, Negroes and Whites alike, need an enormous amount of urging to fill out affidavits or to take any kind of initiative. There are also people who resent the direct action taken by the movement. They say that education is necessary before discrimination can be done away with. The movement has, however, tried to combine action and education in proportion which will be most effective to produce better human relations

in the community.

Resistance has been spasmodic in that it is felt most at the peak of a big project. For instance, when S-CIC had been picketing the campus restaurants the owners of Birwell's said business had improved. Steak and Shake Drive-In said business was better than the previous week. Skelton's Drugs was willing to serve Negroes in booths, but not at the counter. Todd said that he would fight having to serve Negroes if it took him 15 years.

The barbers union might be considered to be organized resistance although the union is not organized for this purpose.

Why do people join this movement? What satisfactions are involved. One of the professors of the University who has been connected with the movement from its early stages said that before the movement started he had noticed discrimination, disliked it, but had never done anything about it. He said that he will be forever grateful to those who got the movement started.

Larl Rappaport, student co-chairman of S-CHRC said he was acquainted with the movement because of his sister's close association with it and it was sort of handed down to him. He feels that an understanding of the movement, its goals and workings would help him in his major field of law and politics. He also gets great personal satisfaction from it.

Another student member said she joined because she hates discrimination, what it stands for and what it is. S-CHRC is the only way she has found to do anything about it.

Mr. Lee Carey, present director of Douglas Community Center, expresses a Negro's interest. He realizes that someone in a position as a professor might very easily be able to make contacts that he could never make himself. "S-CHRC tries to bring the two races together. It has given us (Douglas Center) aid by sending volunteers to teach courses in arts and crafts, modern dance, physical education activities, square dancing, to work in the library and to build a stage (Acacia Isaternity Help Week)."

This social movement has accomplished a great deal in its seven years of existence and it is still going strong. It has done an amazing job of erasing "Jim Crow" from its Matrix group. The movement often has had to wage a strong battle to gain its ends (pickets in the restaurant project, for instance) but there has never been any violence either by the movement or by its opponents. And once the movement has succeeded in a project, the change has been very well accepted by the Matrix group.

There has been a great deal of merging among the organizations within the movement, but the movement, as a whole, has not merged with any other movements.

The movement is very active. We hope that we have made

that fact obvious. It has objectives which its participants powerfully and sincerely believe in. They have plenty of material to work on and have managed to organize themselves into an effective force.

In a movement with such objectives, it would be very easy to fall back to "just talking and no acting." Only SCOLAF seems to have started in this direction. They have the housing project and have accomplished very little. The organization is at present working on an independent woman's house which has no law of discrimination. This house has had only one Negro apply for residence and she was legitimately turned down because the house was full. At the present time there is such a waiting list, that the house will be full for at least the next two years.

It is interesting to note that SCOLAF is largely made up of the radical element of the movement.

The movement is now active on the barbershop problem. There are no results as yet, but it shows how effective the movement is. It is working hard and is wisely refraining from too great extremes. Again, as always, it keeps a constant watch over itself to be positive that it stays within the limits of the law.

We cannot see how the movement can fail in its present project or in any future projects. The movement simply keeps on working until it does gain its ends.

Very objective account; just a few minor slips.

1. Didn't mention opening of Urbana Swimming Pool.
2. Didn't mention Brotherhood Week, Negro Student Scholarships.
3. Didn't mention formation of Douglass Center project in S-CHRC in ~~xxxx~~ 1952.
4. I am not ~~xxx~~ aware of the event described on top of p. 14.
5. S-CHRC distributed 5,000 (not 3,000).
6. "the funds to charity" business is not the case, the Daily Illini quotation re-presented the private opinion of Tom Scott. S-CHRC has no control over the conduct of the case.
7. There is organized resistance by union barbers: (a) chipped in on lawyer's fee for Ingwersen case, (b) tried to get all Champaign and Urbana barbers to agree not to serve Negroes, (c) tried through their delegates to Twin City Federation of Labor to 'punish' the University YMCA by trying to get labor delegates on Community Chest to withhold the Y's \$10,000 appropriation.
8. Statement on p. 19 is doubtful. SCODAF is no longer 'radical.' Might also point out that almost all ex-SCICers who joined SCODAF have now left campus.

HMTiebout