



## Organizations and Events

### CORE

The Congress of Racial Equality was founded in 1942 to help eliminate racial discrimination. CORE organized two **Freedom Rides** to test federal decisions that were intended to eliminate segregation involving interstate transportation. The first test was in 1947 and the second test was in 1961.

In 1947, the first Freedom Ride was called the *Journey of Reconciliation* and was created to test the 1946 U. S. Supreme Court decision that ended segregated seating of interstate passengers. CORE sent a group of nonviolent, interracial passengers, by bus (Trail ways and Greyhound) into the Deep South (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana) where segregation was mandated by state laws and customs. Although the Freedom Riders anticipated resistance and violence, they were not prepared for the stiff opposition. Some were arrested and placed on the chain gang, thus ending the first challenge to segregation of public transportation.

In May 1961, in response to Pres. John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign to support civil rights and the 1960 U. S. Supreme Court decision in *Boynton v Virginia*, CORE sent another nonviolent interracial group (6 whites and 7 blacks) of protestors into the Deep South again. This diverse group included a college professor, a minister and his wife, an ex-Navy officer, turned pacifist and students to determine whether the federal government would enforce the *Boynton* ruling, which outlawed segregation of bus terminal facilities such as restrooms, restaurants and waiting rooms for interstate transportation.

The planned route was from Washington, DC to Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. On the two Trailway and Greyhound buses, Black protestors sat in the front and White protestors sat in the back sections. When the buses arrived at the terminals in each state, the Whites used the facilities and areas designated for Blacks and vice versa. There was no violence until the Freedom Riders reached Rock Hill, SC where Whites attacked them. Mobs also attacked them in Alabama in Anniston, Birmingham and Montgomery, where one of the buses was firebombed. Riders on the second bus were severely beaten, and needed hospitalization, which they did not receive.

The media coverage of the violence attracted more Freedom Riders. More than 300 were jailed in Alabama. The media coverage also brought national attention to the Freedom Riders, the Civil Rights Movement and the White officials who condoned the violence.

On November 1, 1961, the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) in stronger and more specific language eliminated segregation of interstate transportation and terminal facilities.

## **NAACP**

An outgrowth of the Niagara Movement, the NAACP was founded in 1909 as an interracial, civil rights organization. Its purpose was to eliminate racial discrimination against African-Americans. They were very successful in removing discrimination through the many lawsuits that they brought on behalf of Blacks.

## **SNCC**

Students founded Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee or Snick in 1960. In February 1960 students at NC A&T University tried to integrate the Woolworth Department store lunch counter in Greensboro, NC. They were refused service and the students staged a sit-in. As a result of the sit-ins, students wanted to have a more active role in the Civil Rights Movement, apart from that which was directed by adults. The students organized SNCC. In 1966 Stokely Carmichael replaced John Lewis as chairman and the organization became more outspoken and militant.

## **SCLC**

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference was established after the 1955 bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. In 1957, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. brought together ministers and Black church members to create SCLC. Many African American leaders such as Ella Baker, the Honorable Andrew Young, the Rev. Ralph Abernathy, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, The Rev. Joseph Lowery and the Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth were associated with the successful nonviolent direct action (boycott, demonstration, marches and sit-ins) of SCLC.

## **March on Washington**

In 1963 A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin and The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King organized at the time the largest demonstration in American history. The March on Washington was held on August 28, 1963 in Washington, DC. In addition to trying to bring attention to the lack of civil rights, the march wanted to make America aware of the economic situation that Blacks and poor people faced in terms of lack of employment, lack of fair access to jobs and equal salaries.

The march brought together a group of leaders and organizations, Roy Wilkins (NAACP) James Farmer (CORE) John Lewis (SNCC), Whitney Young (Urban League) and Rev. King (SCLC).

Organizers expected 100,000 but more than 250, 000 came. Three students ages 16, 17 and 18 walked more than 700 miles and arrived a week early for the march.