

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : SAC (157-1308)

DATE: 7/26/68

FROM : SA WILLIAM H. LAWRENCE

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE FOR EQUALITY (COME)
RM

On 6/27/68 [REDACTED] orally advised
SA's HOWELL S. LOWE and WILLIAM H. LAWRENCE as follows:

(Note information herein furnished to Lt. E. H.
ARKIN, Intelligence Bureau, Memphis Police Department,
7/3/68.)

1-157-1308 - COME
1-170-704 [REDACTED]
1-157-556 - Possible Racial Violence, Major Urban Areas
1-157-1067 - BOP
1-100-4528 - [REDACTED]
1-170-98 - [REDACTED]
1-170-1104 - [REDACTED]
1-170-1114 - [REDACTED]
1-157-166 - SCLC
1-157-1312 - Black Knights
1-100- [REDACTED]
①-157-1092 - Sanitation Workers Strike
1-157-957 - [REDACTED]
1-157-1230 - [REDACTED]
1-157-1229 - [REDACTED]
1-170-1024 - [REDACTED]
1-157-1173 - [REDACTED]
1-157-1000 - [REDACTED]
1-157-1019 - [REDACTED]
1-170-1040 - [REDACTED]
1-157-1292 - [REDACTED]
1-157- [REDACTED]
1-157-1070 - [REDACTED]
2-157-New - [REDACTED]
1-157-1125 - [REDACTED]
1-157- [REDACTED]
1-66-1687-Sub - Dissemination

WHL:wp
(28)

157-1092-357

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED <i>ll</i>	FILED <i>ll</i>
JUL 29 1968	
FBI - MEMPHIS	

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wp MFO 157-1092 Sec. 5

ME 157-1308

COME had its formal organizational meeting Tuesday night, 6/25/68, at First Baptist Church, Beale, Pastor Rev. JAMES A. JORDAN. COME leaders H. RALPH JACKSON, Director, Minimum Salary, AME Church, and Rev. JAMES MORRIS LAWSON, JR., had only a few of their supporters there.

CHARLES L. CABBAGE, head of Black Organizing Project (BOP), had 10 or 12 of his supporters there. Rev. JORDAN and CORNELIA CRENSHAW, former Memphis Housing Authority employee, were worried that H. RALPH JACKSON was misusing the COME treasury. Rev. JORDAN and CRENSHAW became semi-allies of CABBAGE and his group, who wanted to turn COME into a "Community Action Group." According to CABBAGE, LAWSON and JACKSON immediately saw they were outnumbered; they felt CABBAGE and his followers presented a threat. CABBAGE said that on 4/15/68 and 6/15/68 COME gave BOP \$500 on each occasion and that COME has already paid out \$2,000 in attorney's fees and bonds for BOP people such as JOHN B. SMITH and JOHN HENRY FERGUSON, who have been arrested several times in the spring of 1968. COME considers this to be an unnecessary drain on the treasury. Now CABBAGE, et al, are insisting on an additional \$500.

JACKSON and LAWSON tried to postpone the meeting a week and wanted to postpone adopting a constitution. They tried to adjourn the meeting. One of the Invaders was Sergeant at Arms and would not let them out, on CABBAGE's orders. Finally JACKSON threatened to call the police and CABBAGE ordered them released. After JACKSON, LAWSON, and their supporters left, CABBAGE, et al, resumed the meeting, supported by some dissident COME people, such as CRENSHAW. CABBAGE claimed COME has \$25,000 in treasury and owes all this money to BOP. He said COME gave SCLC \$1,000 for Resurrection City but will not spend money in Memphis.

CABBAGE said one of his supporters is ALVIN KING, male Negro, a former policeman, now associated in real estate business with O. W. PICKETT, realtor, Negro, and political supporter of former Memphis Mayor WILLIAM B. INGRAM. KING is running for State Legislature against RUSSELL B. SUGARMON, JR.

CABBAGE said they elected their own slate of COME officers and named Rev. JORDAN as temporary chairman and CORNELIA CRENSHAW as temporary secretary.

He said J. B. TROTTER of Lorraine Street, a Firestone employee, came up with a copy of a constitution, that they read it and adopted it.

ME 157-1308

[REDACTED] there will now be a big fight for control of COME as JACKSON has the treasury and will not give it up.

On 7/3/68 [REDACTED] advised that he attended the next COME meeting held on the night of 7/2/68 also at Beale Street Baptist Church; the turnout was large. Rev. JAMES LAWSON and RALPH JACKSON had their followers there, including many Sanitation Department and hospital workers and members of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Union, AFL-CIO, headed by organizer, JESSE EPPS, and LEROY CLARK of United Furniture Workers, AFL-CIO. This group held a pre-meeting caucus at Clayborn Temple. They came prepared to control the meeting. This was an "official call meeting of COME."

Despite this, BOP, the Invaders, and CRENSHAW and Rev. JAMES A. JORDAN tried to retain their temporary control of COME. The BOP showed up in mass. Among those recognized were CHARLES BALLARD, CHARLES CABBAGE, BEN BERRY, JAMES PHILLIPS, OREE MCKENZIE, MELVIN SMITH, JOHN BURRELL SMITH, CHARLES HARRINGTON, MURRELL McCULLOUGH, EDWINA HARRELL, JOHN HENRY FERGUSON. Rev. L. R. DONSON was temporary chairman. He was unable to control the meeting.

A group of Black Knights, Inc., headed by coordinator WARREN LEWIS, and associates ISSAC HAYES, ROOSEVELT GREEN, and (FNU) COLLINS, an Army veteran, came as observers.

DONSON could not keep JOHN B. SMITH and CABBAGE quiet. They kept yelling obscenities and trying to disrupt the meeting.

Rev. LAWSON set out the agenda.

The BOP kept trying to invoke parliamentary procedure, but finally "threw it to the winds" and became disruptive.

LAWSON tried to explain:

- (1) Reason for COME
- (2) Reading of the Constitution

ME 157-1308

- (3) Explanation of 6/28/68 incomplete meeting and attempted take-over by disruptive elements
- (4) A report of Finance Committee showing \$19,060.35 in treasury
- (5) Report of Nominating Committee.

H. RALPH JACKSON reported that COME had already given BOP \$2,000 in legal aid and bond money, plus \$500 for furniture.

CABBAGE tried to elaborate on the money spent, but JESSE EPPS, et al, "cut him off."

JAMES PHILLIPS kept trying to shout down EPPS, who took over chairmanship of the meeting.

CABBAGE challenged JESSE EPPS' right to be there, claiming he was not from Memphis. EPPS claimed he had been duly elected as co-chairman of COME in February 1968 when it was first formed and that Rev. DONSON was the other co-chairman.

O. W. PICKETT supported CABBAGE and BOP.

LEROY CLARK tried to shout JOHN B. SMITH and PHILLIPS down.

EPPS finally gave each person interested three minutes in which to speak re events of 6/28/68 meeting.

Rev. H. RALPH JACKSON spoke for the "old line" COME group, told of the disruption and Invader harassment and intimidation at the 6/28/68 meeting.

CORNELIA CRENSHAW arose, read a list of all present at the 6/28/68 meeting, told how she and BOP had a rump meeting and elected Rev. JAMES A. JORDAN as chairman. She said they were supported by ALVIN KING, Rev. W. L. PORTER, and O. W. PICKETT.

LAWSON spoke; he said that if COME became a permanent organization, it could get \$40,000, at \$1,300 a month, from some foundation, called Inter-Religious Foundation for Community Organization.

ME 157-1308

For a while the Black Knights sat in front. Finally ISSAC HAYES got the floor. He said all present were acting like little children, that he as vice-chairman of Black Knights was invited as a guest and to possibly join COME, but was reluctant to do so if COME was to continue in this bickering vein. The Black Knights, he said, did not want to get into a controversial, dissension torn group.

Also present was a fat male Negro, GEORGE E. PIPKIN, a former Memphian, now living in Illinois. He said he went to Booker T. Washington High School in 1960 or 1961, now has a Black Nationalist movement in Illinois, wore a bright red soft "fez" type cap. He said he was temporarily visiting in Memphis with one HERMAN and GERTRUDE ROBINSON. He said his local phone number was WH 8-5018. He said his "faith" came from Africa, Central Africa.

(1967 City Directory shows one GEORGE E. PIPKIN, wife PAULINE, laborer, IC Railroad, residence 528 East Person, and shows HERMAN ROBINSON, wife GERTRUDE, a machine operator at Southern Cotton Oil Company, residence 2119 Wabash.

At one point in the meeting an SCLC representative, FRANK MITCHELL, a school teacher, clean cut, light skinned, tried to restrain JAMES PHILLIPS, to keep him from intimidating the chairman.

Other Invader or BOB loudmouths were JOHN HENRY FERGUSON and BEN BERRY. FERGUSON wore a Black Power shirt.

JAMES EDWARD SMITH, former CORE worker, now organizing city hospital workers for EPPS' union, was there, as were CRENSHAW and PICKETT supporter TARLESE MATTHEWS and her sister.

H. RALPH JACKSON spoke of any indiscriminate dispersal of money to BOP and Invaders. Rev. H. L. STARKS, who was there, said Rev. JAMES M. LAWSON, JR., gave up a free trip to Czechoslovakia during the sanitation strike, moved that COME help finance his forthcoming trip to World Council of Churches meeting in Sweden.

CHARLES S. BALLARD kept trying to get Rev. DONSON back in as chairman, so he "could use him."

ME 157-1308

A scattering of whites were present, including Attorney EDGAR GILLOCK.

GERALD FANION of West Tennessee Chapter, Tennessee Council on Human Relations, was there.

ORRE MCKENZIE and JOHN B. SMITH and BEN BERRY kept yelling that they would physically assault the COME ministers if the meeting did not go to suit them.

[REDACTED] said the following COME officers were elected:

"Nominating Committee:

"J. M. Lawson, Jr.

"J. B. Trotter

"William Smith

"Jarrett Atkins

"H. Ralph Jackson

"L. R. Donson

"L. E. Crittenden

"PRESIDENTS (Elect 7 only)

"Rev. L. R. Donson

"Rev. Jasper W. Williams

"Rev. H. L. Starks

"Mrs. Wilkerson

"Dr. E. W. Reed

"Mr. Murray Ervin

"Leroy Clark

"SECRETARY (Elect 1 only)

"Mrs. Irma Laws

"ASSISTANT SECRETARIES (Elect 2)

"William Smith

"Malcolm D. Blackburn

"STRATEGY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

"Ezekiel Bell

"CENTRAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

"Rev. James Lawson, Jr.

"ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

"Rev. N. Charles Thomas

ME 157-1308

"FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

"Rev. H. Ralph Jackson

"TREASURER

"Rev. Gilbert Patterson

"CENTRAL COMMITTEE (Elect 21 only at least 10 ministers)

"Rev. T. C. Lightfoot

"Mr. J. B. Trotter

"Mrs. Claudette Mabone

"Mr. Thomas Nelson

"Father J. Atkins

"Mrs. Alma Morris

"Rev. P. L. Rowe

"Mrs. Blanche Fanion

"Mr. Harvey Branch

"James E. Smith

"Mrs. Thomas Matthews

"Rev. S. B. Kyles

"Rev. Samuel Herring

"Rev. M. D. Blackburn

"Mrs. Zola Petty

"Rev. Edward Brown

"Mrs. Gertrude Smith


"Squire Jesse Turner

"Rev. Eugene Waller

"Mr. T. O. Jones

"Attorney Otis Higgs

"EACH ORGANIZATION THAT REMAINS A PART CAN ELECT A MEMBER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE."

 furnished a throw-away issued prior to the meeting preceding the 7/2/68 meeting. It reads as follows:

"COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE FOR EQUALITY
Memphis, Tennessee
June 27, 1968

"Dear Friends:

"A large number of individuals and organizations who joined Community on the Move for Equality (C.O.M.E.) at the meeting held June 25 witnessed a true effort to organize a permanent C.O.M.E. with total community management of its affairs.

ME 157-1308

"We continue to invite all groups and individuals to join C.O.M.E. We must keep the unity which brought about the Sanitation Workers Victory. Please attend our next meeting:

"Tuesday Night - July 2, 1968 - 8 P M

"First Baptist Church - 379 Beale

"An Election of Officers will be held in a democratic manner with nominations from the floor as all offices of the temporary organization of C.O.M.E. are now vacant.

"The following officers will be elected:

"Seven (7) Presidents - One (1) Secretary and (2) Assistants - Treasurer - Central Committee Chairman - Strategy Committee Chairman - Administrative Committee Chairman - Finance Committee Chairman and twenty-one (21) Central Committee members.

"C.O.M.E. belongs to the community. Please come and choose its leaders.

"Reverend James A. Jordan,
Temporary Chairman

"Cornelia M. Crenshaw,
Temporary Secretary

"(Please make the following announcement in all meetings prior to Tuesday, July 2, 1968. Thank you.)

"All Organizations and individuals are invited to join

"COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE FOR EQUALITY (C.O.M.E.)

"Please attend our next meeting to be held

"Tuesday Night - July 2, 1968 - 8 P M

"First Baptist Church - 379 Beale Street

"An election of officers will be held at this meeting

"WE CAME TOGETHER AND WON VICTORY FOR THE SANITATION WORKERS

"LET US STAY TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE AND JOBS FOR NEGROES

"Reverend James A. Jordan,
Temporary Chairman

"Cornelia M. Crenshaw,
Temporary Secretary"

ME 157-1308

ME 338-R furnished a copy of a report of the Finance Committee of COME which reads as follows:

"REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
"C. O. M. E.

"We have published the name and amount of all contributors.

"Total Receipts \$347,705.03

"Paid Out

"To the Union for support of workers (AFSCME LOCAL 1733)	\$321,000.00
"SCLC	1,000.00
"SCLC	2,300.00
"SCLC (Cedric Moore)	426.00
"Donation to Persons at Resurrection City	900.00
"Tennessee Council Human Relations (refund)	51.38
"Donation to Black Organizing Project	500.00
"Attorney Fee for Black Organizing Project	2,110.00
"MSD - Printing & postage	357.30
	<u>\$328,644.68</u>
"TOTAL RECEIPTS	347,705.03
"Total Paid Out	328,644.68
"Balance	<u>19,060.35"</u>

[REDACTED] furnished a copy of proposed plan of COME which was adopted at the meeting, which reads as follows: