

community leaders who met to discuss how communities should organize to promote school desegregation. This meeting was attended by about two hundred people and was a confederation of South Carolina civil rights, human relations, and education groups.

Throughout the summer those persons working to stimulate greater school desegregation found that the concerned white persons in the state generally were not aware of the magnitude of the problems, and it was difficult to organize a fearful Negro community. While the major civil rights groups in the state made some efforts to promote school desegregation, their energies were usually devoted to registering voters and other political matters so that any focus on school desegregation was of a low priority. There were only two people in the state who were working full-time on school desegregation for human relations groups. There were, of course, a number of individuals who worked on a volunteer basis in their own communities. Where there were a substantial number of transfers, the large number was due to the efforts of some individual or group in the community who worked to encourage school desegregation.

The Office of Education made little effort to speak directly to community leaders in an attempt to explain government actions. Many concerned individuals in South Carolina communities were totally unequipped to answer the criticisms of the guidelines and the Office of Education. Potential allies were lost because they had no information about what was going on except what their community leaders chose to tell them. In most cases they could only rely on the reports in the local conservative press and they had no idea as to how they could play a constructive role in encouraging their community to comply with the guidelines. The failure of the Office of Education to tell its story effectively to local people permitted those persons who wanted to obstruct its purpose to do so more effectively. Rumor, misinformation, and speculation thrived because the Office of Education failed to recognize the necessity of filling the information gap at the community level.

TERMINATION OF FEDERAL FUNDS?

South Carolina school officials spent considerable time trying to determine whether or not the Office of Education was really serious about cutting off federal funds if a school district did not comply with the letter of the guidelines. Evidence that the Office of Education might be backing down came as early as April 8, 1966, when *The State* reported that it had learned from an Office of Education official that the guidelines would be enforced in a "democratic" way. Then in Secretary Gardner's April 13 letter he stated that the guidelines would be enforced with "considerable flexibility." The June 9 issue of *The State* reported that, "The word from Washington is that substantial faculty and student desegregation will be insisted upon or federal funds will be cut off." But then on June 11 *The State* ran an article with the headline, "U.S. May Not Hold Fast to Threat of Halting Funds to S.C. Schools."

For most of the summer there were reports that state officials were trying to get the guidelines "clarified." What they wanted clarified were the absolute *minimum* requirements of the guidelines. Though HEW and the U.S. Office of Education repeatedly told school officials that their funds would be terminated if they did not comply with the guidelines, the school men never really took them seriously.

The administrators were aware that the Office of Education were susceptible to political pressures and felt that the Office would eventually have to back down. Others felt that the U.S. Office was merely bluffing and would not really cut off funds. Still others had defied the guidelines last year and had not been denied federal funds, so they felt they could get away with it again in 1966. Interpretations of the Office of Education's position by state officials and newspaper pundits did little to clarify the issue. There were indications that the Office of Education would insist that some provisions of the guidelines be adhered to, but that some of the requirements were less important and would not have to be followed as closely.

The alleged lack of clarity in the guidelines and on the part of the Office of Education, fused with the desire of school officials to get off the hook, permitted school officials to say: "It's a little difficult to know exactly what they (Office of Education) want" (*Charleston News & Courier*, July 30, 1966); "We don't know what is coming from day to day" (*Columbia State*, August 19,