

7. Why organize in Boston now as opposed to later?

At one level the problems only increase internally with time, they do not abate. Losing more in time is not necessarily recoverable in the union/community organization model we are building. The beginnings always prejudice the ends in organizing.

Furthermore, if we are going to organize in Boston it is important to try and involve any potential membership there in ACORN 80 and the New York experience. We have all shared and seen the membership and leadership achievements in Memphis and St. Louis. These were watershed experiences for the entire organization. ACORN 80 and New York will be the same kind of fundamental organizational turning point, which should be shared by the maximum membership possible. By organizing in Boston in '81 or '82 or some other time the preconditions for this experience will not exist and they would not be involved in something that is going to be so fundamental to all of us. Yet they should be, so we should begin sooner, not later.

I find the participation of Boston members in ACORN 80 and New York compelling.

EXTERNAL SOUNDINGS

In inquiries conducted outside of the internal process, I have spoken to Heather Bush from the Midwest Academy, which does training for Fair Share, and with Mike Ansara, director for Fair Share. I have also sounded out some key funding sources of ACORN's and a host of other people.

Heather understands the reasons for organizing in Boston, but wishes that we could figure out another way to answer these internal needs. She believes that it will provoke problems and bad feelings in some quarters of the organizing world. She believes it will be difficult for us to work together.

I appreciate Heather's frankness in the discussions I have had with her. I believe that if there are reasons consistent with ACORN's goals and agenda, that we will indeed find ways to work together. I have proposed an "organizers council" based on participation of all the major organizing networks in the country as one vehicle which might achieve this effect. I think Heather's view is true potentially in the short run, but not in the long run. It is a long march, and those making it will all be there at the end.

Michael Ansara has sent a letter which I have distributed to the board and the organizers. It speaks to his view on this subject more eloquently than I could, so I will let it stand there. Were there a vote, he would clearly vote against.

I believe that we should attempt to fashion some plan which meets Fair Share's concerns and achieves our own goals. I am hard pressed to name it quickly, but I have to believe that such a plan is possible. Perhaps the board would be willing to affiliate Boston ACORN to Massachusetts Fair Share, although I don't know exactly how that would work off-land. I think we should propose to Fair Share some way of assuring that they are confident that our initiatives towards Massachusetts are affirmative to our constituency and not negative towards them. I believe this is the root cause of our interest in Boston, so hopefully we will find a way to assure them. On the long run it allows Fair Share to concentrate its considerable resources in areas where they can have great and maximum impact, and it allows them to assess internally the future directions for their organization in Massachusetts. We are not enemies to this process, and in fact on all fronts I believe that our organizing in Boston would strengthen Fair Share. Fundamentally what is good for lower income people in Boston as they organize will be good for both Massachusetts ACORN and Fair Share.