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CURE
CITIZENS UNITED FOR RACIAL EQUALITY
520 "E" STREET, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101

December 14, 1970

The Honorable J. Robert Helland
Mayor of La Mesa
8130 Allison Avenue
La Mesa, California

Dear Mayor Helland:

Citizens United for Racial Equality, (CURE), is a civic organization of over 500 members from throughout San Diego County. We are a predominantly white group concerned with promoting racial equality and, more specifically, urging the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders issued in 1968 (Kerner Report). Consequently, we are disturbed by the remarks made by Officer Oliver on December 3rd and offer these comments.

To paraphrase a thought from the Kerner Report: what white Americans still do not fully understand--but what the Negro (Mexican-American, Indian, Puerto Rican, etc.) can never forget--is that white society created, maintains and condones racism. The comments of Officer Oliver, the responses of others on the panel, and the amusement of the crowd are simply another embarrassing and painful manifestation of this deeply tragic national problem for which we of white America all share some responsibility. The subtle participation of the crowd through their laughter shows how common this prejudice is.

CURE knows that some action has already been taken in this matter, but still has these concerns: (1) That Officer Oliver become personally and sincerely aware of the attitudes from which his hurtful behavior so innocently and naturally emerged, (2) that others involved, and this includes the audience, become equally aware of their own attitudes and how they participated and share responsibility with Officer Oliver, and (3) that Officer Oliver's superiors and others who sponsored the meeting recognize that this is not just an isolated incident.

We hope this awareness will lead those in positions of responsibility and authority to sponsor training programs in human relations for their employees in order to provide these employees with the opportunity to become aware of their own attitudes and to change them. There are a number of organizations in San Diego which can provide human relations training. Persons who can be contacted concerning such services are:

Mr. Carroll W. Waymon, Institute of Social Systems Engineering, Inc., phone 263-4491;
Dr. Larry D. Carlin, Center for the Study of the Person, phone 459-3861; and
Dr. Uvaldo F. Palomares, Human Development Training Institute, phone 283-7063.

Discipline appears necessary and deserved. But discipline (in the sense of training) should not be reserved for Officer Oliver alone. More important, we feel, is that we recognize again how pervasive this attitude is in the white community, that we publicly acknowledge it, and take specific and positive steps to reduce it.

We commend The Daily Californian for their forthright reporting of this incident. We urge you to take equally forthright action.

Sincerely,

C. S. Swift
President

CSS:rb