**America’s Peacemakers: The Community**

**Relations Service and Civil Rights**

**Book Club**

**Session II –** Chapters 6-12 (pp. 147 – 302)

**Discussion Questions**

1. **Chapter 6** discusses how police use of deadly force and police community relations became a priority issue for the Agency (p. 169) and describes in detail a number of cases where it offered its good offices to address issues of police use of deadly force, minority recruitment and worked to establish police-community relations program. By the end of the 1970s, CRS Director Gilbert Pompa credited CRS as one of the major players on the issue and noted the reduction in numbers of killing by police. (p. 175).

Sadly, the trend did not continue. In his note at the end of the chapter, Grande Lum writes that “Levine’s positivity” did not play out in the decades that followed. Why did this happen? Do you think the “CRS playbook” could be revived and applied today?

1. **Chapter 7** Education Amid Turmoil takes us to Ground Zero of the Boston school desegregation crisis of the 1970s.

*Interracial fear and loathing blanketed the city. Disruption and reduced attendance were intertwined. Protest and disorder in the streets led to disorder in the schools, violence in one school led to increased absences throughout the city. It took more than three months before most of Boston’s classrooms could claim a stable attendance in an environment in which educational programs could take place.* (p. 191)

How did CRS approach the problem? How was learning from the Boston case applied elsewhere?

1. If the Selma chapter is a lodestone for the Part 1 of the book, Grande Lum’s chapter on the Skokie incident (Chapter 11 – Nazis, Free Speech and Hate) helps anchor Part II in describing in detail the painstaking and dramatic efforts of CRS to mediate high-stakes conflicts. CRS saw their role as doing things to keep the peace during any demonstration by the neo-Nazis.

What skills and resources was CRS able to deploy in the Skokie case that contributed to a successful mediation and absence of violence? How do you think CRS would do today, let’s say between neo-Nazi protesters and antifa groups?

1. Session II’s reading assignment showcases a wide range of CRS casework, mediation and conciliation strategies and its ability to bring resources to bear in creative ways. What stories resonated with you and why?