

[c. 1963]

PROSPECTUS
for the
Civil Rights Program
of the
Northern Student Movement Coordinating Committee

Introduction

This is a request for funds to provide for the establishment of a special student civil rights project among the colleges along the eastern seaboard. The funds requested shall be used to provide information and communication for and among the student groups which have tangibly demonstrated an interest in combating discrimination in the Central Atlantic and New England states.

The Project as herein outlined will require a \$29,820.00 grant to operate over a two year period.

Background

The Northern Student Movement Coordinating Committee (NSMCC) originated as the response of Northern college students to both the non-violent civil rights campaign of Southern students and the critical importance which race relations has assumed throughout the North. Specifically the NSMCC grew out of a special conference of the Student Christian Movement held at camp O-AT-KA in June 1961. At that conference a number of students were stirred by the vivid appeals of recent participants in freedom rides and sit-ins to apply the same methods of direct action to dramatize the more "casual" indignities involved in the "northern-way-of-life."

Accordingly the Conference set up an interim committee of undergraduate and graduate students to work with a faculty member to investigate the feasibility of creating a coordinated thrust for campus civil rights activity. At a seminar the following October, representatives gathered in New Haven, Conn., from twenty New England colleges to pass on the committee's proposals. At that seminar the structure was set out, the foundation for methods laid and the sense of a movement began.

Since that time individuals and groups throughout New England have launched into varied efforts to remove racial barriers, inspired by their feeling of participation in an area-wide effort. A new energy has begun to rumble on the campus of every major school in the region. Harvard, Dartmouth, Smith, Amherst, Brown, Yale, Radcliffe, Wesleyan, University of Connecticut and University of Massachusetts have all seen new campus groups start dynamic programs aimed at confronting the campus and community with their separate and unequal ways of life. These efforts have run from testing local motels and restaurants in their employment and patronage policies to trying to change campus admissions policies, off-campus housing policies and those governing community facilities from grade schools and churches to skating rinks. Smaller colleges such as Mt. Holyoke, Trinity, Pembroke, Manhattanville, Connecticut College, Tufts, and Simmons have similarly begun comparable programs of action. Just recently several of the colleges in the New York area have announced similar plans.

Need

With the opening of this new militant assault on discrimination, many things have been found wanting and the future portends many more needs to be met.

1) The foremost need is a source of constant information among the various groups to keep them abreast of one another's activities, problems, programs and successes. Without this information each active group tends to feel isolated and less significant than they actually are, which destroys their sense of mission and accomplishment. 2) The need for contact exists not only among the group themselves, but between them and the rest of the national community working in the area of race relations. Whatever editorial or socially scientific comment is produced, is valuable to the student groups, be it on housing, voting, employment, public accommodations, slum clearance, education. This matter needs to be collected and digested promptly to allow local student groups broader perspective in their programs. 3) At present there is also a problem of duplication and conflict vis a vis the established human relations agencies. The current surge of student activities has brought with it a mutual suspicion between students and the standing human relations agencies. The former condemns the latter as being too "conservative" and the latter charges the former with being "irresponsible". In almost all instances this mutual recrimination is the result of inadequate information on both sides as to what the other is doing and why.

Finally, but by no means last, there is a crucial need to reestablish contact between the northern students and the southern students in their comparable efforts for racial justice. Given that the protests waged by Southern students are no longer reported by the mass media, it has become increasingly difficult, if not impossible, for the campuses of the North to be informed on the latest happenings behind the "cotton curtain" of the South. Oftimes students outside the South are frustrated in expressing their moral and tangible support when students are arrested or expelled or abused.

Proposal

The Project Staff will consist of an Administrator, Field Representative, and a Secretary working as employees of an inter-collegiate governing body as outlined in detail by the enclosed Articles of Operation. The Project shall maintain constant contact and cooperation with its non-student advisors and its Executive Committee members who shall oversee the fiscal responsibilities.

The goals of the Project will be:

1. To facilitate the communication among students concerned with human relations and civil rights problems by publishing regularly comments and descriptions of current and prospective activities.
2. To announce immediately the needs of the Southern students as they arise, whether they be moral, physical or financial.
3. To organize student conferences on race relations at the campus, state and area level to explain how the campus programs can be developed.
4. To provide information for student groups as to the facilities and resources available to assist their efforts.
5. To transmit background material and information on methodology to individual groups through extended visits to the campuses.
6. To collect and compile a semi-annual report giving case studies of the various action programs undertaken by college students on Northern campuses.