

Mississippi Operations: rundown by Moses

Began in McComb in 1961. In summer of '61 began idea of staff. Stayed there until December '61. Dec '61 came to Jackson and ran Smith campaign, helped set up Free Press, recruited workers from Jackson, Nashville, McComb. Curtis Hayes and Hollis Watkins went to Hattiesburg in Feb '62 and stayed through the summer. Rest of the staff worked in Jackson through June. In June VEP money came through and from June through August '62 SNCC, CORE, NAACP worked in Jackson and SNCC set up summer projects in Greenwood, Greenville, Vicksburg, Ruleville, Hattiesburg, Cleveland. Had 13 staff. Also that summer began workshops in Mt. Buleah, 2 week long workshops for local people with help of Highlander. This was beginning of systematic training. Work continued from August to Feb. 28 largely as it had that summer. The decision was made in August to work through COFO: political decision since SNCC couldn't get all the money and because on a long term basis cooperation between groups would be needed. On Feb. 28 Travis was shot and Branton announced a crash program in Greenwood so staff was pulled in. First time staff was shifted without group decision. From Feb. 28 to July '63 everyone was in Greenwood. Staff grew to 35 with recruitment of Greenwood people. NAACP began its Jackson drive. People went back to where they were before in July. Also during the summer the mock election (affadavits) developed and was administered and the Washington march happened. Mid-September a staff meeting in Greenwood was held and the decision was made to create a statewide program. 20 cities would be worked. Last two weeks in Sept. were spent recruiting for the COFO meeting October 6 which would give approval to the program. At that meeting decision was made to run Henry.

Problems for meeting:

- Get overall view of where C.R. movement is and what are the main foci around the country.
- What is Mississippi's place in that context.
- What program should be developed on the basis of this.  
(Zinn was to have talked on first of these as basis for discussion. He didn't and what he did say led to discussion of a different sort. sch)
- Other problems to be dealt with: concept of staff and need for responsibility to be more delegated; needs for the program if it is to be carried out; agents for change; how to pull off the program -- how to meet problems that might arise.

Zinn:

CR movement seems to be at a lull. We have learned over the past few years that the hard core areas have special problems. Techniques that work other places won't here because movement has not any power. Must either have violent revolution, or ability to attract power from another source -- i.e., Federal govt. Federal Government won't make social economic changes in South now but might make change in the totalitarian atmosphere which represses protest that might lead to social and economic change,

Federal Government has the power to give protection, they simply choose a conservative interpretation of the laws that exist. Problem is how to generate enough pressure to change that interpretation. Suggestions for that: suits on planned basis; bringing down prominent people to observe, abstain from voting in Northern ghettos, press conferences for foreign press, action at UN, getting thousands of students down for summer and making it so hot gov't will have to move, have someone run for Congress and demand to be seated.

Plans for the State: Moses:

### Existing Programs:

1. Tougaloo Work Study Project -- needs 3 to 5 more students.
2. Literacy Project
3. SCLC citizenship program -- staff will be sent to offices around the state about the program. Staff should help this expand. Miss Hughes to follow up.
4. Ruleville Home Industry Program -- local people making quilts. Dave Dennis and Joanne Bowman to help expand program around the state, write up Ruleville as case study, get information out to staff.
5. Federal Programs Project -- grew out of Sharecropper's Fund Conference. Idea is to send a work force into each county to organize people into committees to try to take advantage of programs that are available. Need someone to do outline of how to this, what programs are available, etc. Jassie Morris, Charlie Cobb, Jessie Harris to work on this project.
6. Research Program -- Field people can write for information and should send in reports, also. Jessie Morris to coordinate work-study people to work with him.
7. Library at Greenwood -- Greenwood Library now overflowing. Needed: books must get channeled to branch libraries, try to get a library department (maybe AU) to come catalog books, have branch library people come up to learn how to do their libraries, train local people to run the library. Barbara Johnson and Jane Stembridge to work on this from Greenwood. Local staff should ask for help when they're ready to set up branches.
8. Ideas for programs on the model of the Work-Study Project:
  - a. Law Students: get law students into South for a year doing practical legal research. Oscar Chase to do prospectus.
  - b. Architecture Students: Baver Project -- Bob Mises talked to teacher at Hampton and will investigate possibility of architecture students to design and work with local people in construction of community centers or other community buildings.
9. Professional Project: Need to get good students out of the state and into decent schools in hopes that they'll come back. Need to recruit for this. Oscar and Dona Richards.
10. Scholarships and Counseling: Anywhere we have offices we should have feelers out for people who should go on the school. Carol Merrit and Bill Ware to set up program in this area.
11. Work with high school dropouts: Can get high school diploma in Mississippi by passing a test if you haven't finished high school. Need to prepare kids to take this test. Also tutoring work is needed with staff. Carol Merrit and Bill Ware.
12. Institute for Policy Studies: Will get up to six SNCCers jobs with congressman and senators and hold evening seminars as means of training people for offices, or to act as lobbyists. Begins February. Interested people: Ivanhoe Donaldson, Jerry Bray, Frank Smith, Charlie Cobb, Dick Foley, Dona Richard, Hunter M. Gray.
13. ARA, RAD, NASA, MDTA: Jessie Morris
14. Sharecroppers Fund Conference: SCF is willing to hold conference for Mississippi, get Federal people to come down, etc. Dave Dennis has been working on this but can't find a place to meet. Will work with Jessie to try to hold conference in January in Jackson. Other programs above (13) will be developed out of this.
15. Welfare program -- food and clothing.
16. COFO Newsletter -- Cliff Hughes, Willie Blue, Claude Waver to work on getting out statewide COFO newsletter. Staff can write for this.

All of the above must become institutionalized. None of above are offered to Negro community in the state and task of the staff is to get them going on a permanent basis. Must take advantage of lull in action to work on them.

### Future Programs:

Political Party: Great deal of discussion re: whether to set up party. Unresolved. Decision made, however, to organize COFO along political district lines.

VEP: N. funds available for Mississippi. Had been promised \$12,000. Branton says feeling is that too much has been spent in Mississippi. Could be because of pressure from other CR groups or pressure from feds. SNCC will put up \$12,000.

NAACP: Much discussion. Decision made to ask of NAACP only their name and that they not actively work against COFO programming. They will remain in COFO and Jackson will talk with Evers when local problems arise.

Funds: As a beginning CORE, SCLC, NAACP, WEID will be asked to give money will be informed of SNCC's contribution.

Students fro Summer: Much discussion on whether to have students, what racial composition of summer group should be, administrative problems of large numbers of people, whether their presence would force federal action, how to deal with repercussions. Decision delayed on question of how many students can be handled in the summer until we can find out 1) Whether we can get Legal Defense Fund, ACLU to support legal problems and help with strategy, 2) Whether we can get help on food and clothing to deal with financial repercussions to Negro community.

Justice Department: For the first time during mock election JD had advance people on hand -- sent people where votemobiles were going. Also for first time supported political action of this kind as logical extension of voter registration and entitled to same protect.

Mock Registration: Get people who can't pass test to register in mock registration. Keep accurate records, use Northern state procedure of some kind. Not to replace attempts at registration. Organizing method.

Hattiesburg: Strong court order there. Will try to keep many people down.

White Students' Role: Much discussion. Decision to choose roles on basis of qualified people. Will begin project in white community. Miriam Cohen, Mendy Samstein, Jo Ann Bowman, Pat Ryan to go to Biloxi to feel out possibilities, talk with unions and other people in Washington to try to develop contacts. Still feelings about need for leadership to be Negro but no specific decisions made; about how whites should be limited.

## COFO

COFO Conference: December 15 -- Memos to be done on: 1) By-laws for COFO, Constitution, 2) Welfare program, 3) Report on Campaign, 4) Freedom Registration, 5) Poll-tax payment, 7) Funds

## Structure for COFO

Executive Committee: 1 representative from each district to be elected by District Council  
1 representative from each civil rights group  
Officers (President, secretary, treasurer)  
Executive Director

Officers

Executive Committee

District Committees

Staff

Area Committees

Existing Staff

5 SNCC  
8 CORE  
25 SCLC teachers (2 nights a week)  
NAACP trying to get 10 field workers

### Dispersement

1st District: Frank Smith, Holly Springs. Can use several people.  
4th District: 3 people in Canton (G. Raymond, Lenora, 1 local)  
2 people in Meridian (Suarez and Cohen) needs 4 people)  
3rd District: Jackson -- 5-8 work study people (part time)  
McComb-Maclaurin (needs 1 person)  
Natchez -- G. Green (needs 1 person)  
Vicksburg -- Jessie Harris (needs 1 person)  
5th District: C. Glenn, Green, Guyot, Shelley, Jimmy Shaw, (need 3 people)  
2nd District: Greenwood: B. Johnson, Jane Stenbridge, Dick Frey, Smith, King David, Matthe  
Emma Bell, Mary, Sam, Willie Peacock, Mrs. Johnson, Barbara, Mrs. Gusten and  
15 citizenship teachers  
Itta Bena: Willie McGee, Nick Hampton & 7 citizenship teachers  
Holmes Co: 6 citizenship schools  
Panola: Willie Blue  
Clarksdale: James Jones  
Tunica: Dickie Flowers (needs one person)  
Ruleville: M.S. Hammer  
Cleveland: MacLaurin  
Indianaola: " (needs a car)  
Cleveland: Lois  
Greenville: Cobb, Ivanhoe, Hunter (need three replacements)  
Jackson Office: Jo Ann, Mandy, Carol Marrit, Cliff Vaughn, Pat Ryan  
Jessie Morris, Lois Caffee, Dave Dennis Mike Sayer.

### Task:

For next few months work will be done developing area councils. District council meetings will be held prior to COFO meeting. Greenville is to have ready COFO outline (by-laws and constitution) for these meetings. Job will be to organize people into groups. Jessie Morris, Bob Moses, Aaron Henry should be available to float to these meetings in different areas to give content to the meetings and help with organization.

### Campaign Reports:

Should be sent to Jackson office as part of building COFO  
organizing: should include:

1. Name of leaders -- poor workers, plain envelopes, types on different lists
2. names of people who cast votes
3. list of meeting places and polling places and polling places that were available.
4. list of all churches, the Sunday they meet, the pastor and the key contacts.
5. phone books -- circle names of Negroes
6. list of organizations and evaluation of how they will work
7. name of police chief and sheriff.
8. incidents and arrests from each area
9. critical evaluation of the campaign
10. material and clippings.

Needs for setting up Jackson office:  
above plus names of everyone who's tried to register.

Because of complaints about lawyers, must have meeting with someone from NAACP during COFO conference.

Small revolving bail fund set up with bail money that is now floating around for bail.

WATS line coordinator is needed.

Much discussion of difficulties of Greenwood project. Group moved to Greenwood to discuss problems.

Jerry Bray to travel and recruit on campuses.

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