

Carter

MINUTES OF ALABAMA STATE STAFF MEETING APRIL 21-23, 1965

The minutes of the Alabama staff meeting were mimeographed because people in attendance at the meeting felt that it was very good and valuable for them. The minutes are full of statements out of context, misquotes and the like, as are all of the minutes I have seen mimeographed (by SNCC); it is impossible for the best of secretaries to keep up with our meetings. No attempt was made to censor or edit the minutes; read them and you will see....

Taken as a whole, the minutes should give you some insight into the state of the Alabama Project.

5/12/65

Silas

Silas

Silas: In Montogomery at Alabama State, police came to arrest Willie Vechs, but they couldn't get him, so they began shooting into the ground. They finally put him in jail with about 12 others. Now 500 students going into the same building looking for the president.

Courtland: How do you organize around specific things--e.g., free elections?

Bill Hall: To break the ground in a county, you make initial contact with influential person such as a store owner, someone who people have to go to. Lots of people gather at a store to talk. Store owner takes a paper. Talk to them about a current issue, and they will refer you to someone in the community who has power. Just say "Miss X sent us over to you to talk about the movement coming to the county." From the first four or five contacts move out into the same community. Families branch out from community to community and the word spreads from one town to the next through these families, talking at church, gas stations, etc. Ask at the store who are the deacons and mention passages in the bible. The people will respond and often mention that such and such a deacon said same things about freedom in terms of the bible. You contact these deacons and always use strong methods. You said----; I heard from X---. Go around to the plantations at nite. The people will always ask if you need something to eat. People will talk at nite, especially at dinner when they don't think they're being watched. Give out buttons and leaflets when school gets out to the students who will take them home, and then when you contact the families you won't be a stranger since you've contacted the students already. The Masons should be contacted because of their work and respect in the community. People in turn write to relatives in Selma about what is going on and vice-versa. And the word spreads.

Bill: Barber or store keeper, any businessman, is middle-class and living off other Negroes, and will not want to participate.

Gerald: When you go into a community first find place to stay. Spend whole day talking to hosts. Find out from them who would be interested in the movement. Those who are hesitant can be approached best thru mass meetings.

Scotty: Find out from store-owner who feels strongly on issue. Just stopping and talking with people randomly won't get you anywhere.

Parris: How do you determine just from talking to people which are good people?

Gerald: Listen from strong talk. When you get to meeting start discussing issues and leaders will come forward.

Dave Smith: Contact people at bars, pool halls, etc.

Scotty: Moonshiner will let you know where people congregate, but don't bother him during his business hours. He might invite you along with him on his rounds so you can meet the nitty-gritty. You'll find the bootleggers in the church because they go to make contacts for their business. You also won't the mother's with the mustangs the foxes. The mother is always scheming about how to protect the mustang. Try to get invited to dinners after conferences and meetings.

Ninkie: I'm against living in Freedom House. You should live in the community. The freedom house cuts you off.

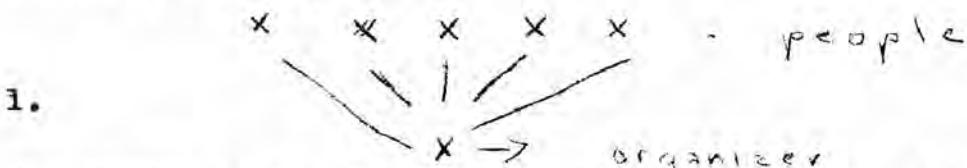
Scotty: You tell person where you live and that your house is open to them as theirs is to you, but if you live in person's house, you put them in danger. Also you limit yourself, by living with a member of the community, to their circle. The Freedom House involves the white community.

Stokley: You need office space and that would be an inconvenience to person you are staying with. Should stay with people also, but move around. Freedom House gives you a central location. I'd like to hear discussion in detail about finding the strong people in a community. Very often you must organize the people against the existing leaders. Dona said that what's wrong with the nation is that there is no check on people once they are in office. How can you check them within the movement itself?

Mants: Part of the problem involves how to avoid in groups.

Winkie: Strong people don't need strong leaders--weak people do. The people have to pressure or move out bad leaders. I point out how ~~weak~~ people are being abused and used, and then they look at the situation differently and act.

Parris: It looks to me like we have three different levels of relations among the people:



All people have talked to him and he is their reference point. Different groups will form like high schools students, college, general etc. and you get something like this:



These different groups are not related. All look to organizer.
If you want:



More hookup between people. The organizer needn't be the focal point of meetings. How can we bring this about?

Silas: What do we think are the strengths of the people, i.e., what makes a strong person?

Gave S: We make people strong. They know what's the score. We just give them the possibility of organization. Strong person is a person who knows where he is going.

Stokley: People get strength from each other. They gain strength from seeing their neighbors take a step forward.

Scotty: By dressing like crackers--goon hats and zoot suit--making joke of the crackers. In Mants Negro farmers see ~~xxxxxx~~ himself talking to himself.

Silas: But what do we think the inner strengths of people are that we work with?

Courtland: People know how things are, but they don't know what to do about it. It is important that people understand that they can do. They should get information. It is most important that they see themselves doing.

Dona: There was a strong woman in freedom School who was strong because she had the feeling she could do anything she wanted to do.

Cynthia: Those who do major work find us, we don't find them.

Silas: How do people living in these circumstances ever gain the strength to do?

Courtland: They must first overcome their fear.

Dona: To help them overcome their fear you must create an atmosphere more familiar to them than a meeting. *During her a freedom march*

Winkie: The tendency in our society is to work through leaders rather than through people. Takes time to condition people.

Dona: There is good and bad organization. A good organization brings people together, a bad one makes everything neat and compartmentalize.

Stokley: People feel that respectable folk should speak for them, i.e., ministers. People in counties look up to L B J, King, local ministers. They always look up and never look to themselves.

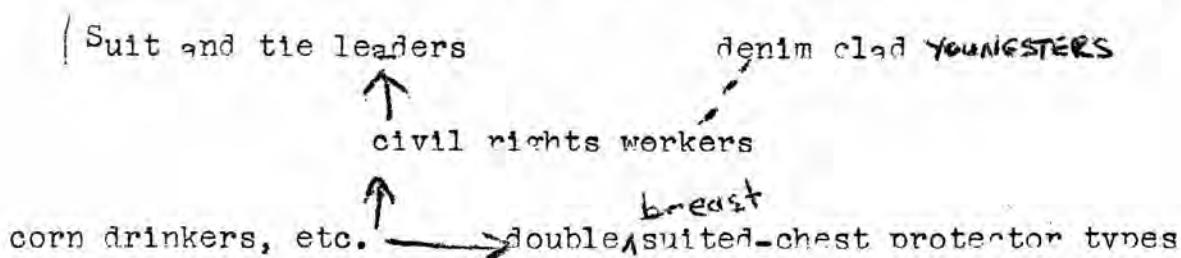
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Cynthia: "To do we show that everyone has a right to speak regardless of what they have to say, what they look like, what they do for a living, etc?"

Bill: Show them how they're sold out by following leaders.

Stokley: Are we to fight propaganda with ~~newspaper~~ propaganda?

Mants: Here's a diagram of how the people think about leaders:



We must change the structure from vertical to horizontal.

Courtland: We're becoming professional free fighters. We should talk of work and energy rather than production. *What makes what different?*

Dave S: Use what you have and what you are. Don't try to break your language down if you're a college graduate.

Scotty: Plant ideas in people's minds when you talk with them. These ideas will be brought forth by them at meetings. *This is liability, or liability under contract of the party*

Cynthia: We have one set of information, the folks another. How can we create an atmosphere where a give and take between us will be possible?

Dona: Hoeing corn with them and dressing in denims doesn't really solve the problem, since just being a civil rights worker gives you a special status among the people.

Mants: The people must choose leaders from their own ranks.

Bill: When you got to meetings and don't feel they're going right, what do you do? *Will you speak out alone?*

Parris: All these problems should be thought about in terms of a two year time table. A different time table gives you a different context. LBJ will be re-elected in '68, so we should aim for the national elections of '72. LBJ will kill the Republican Party, so the arena will be the Democratic Party, and in the fight for control between Bob Kennedy and Humphrey, the South will play a critical role. Between now and '72 we should organize people across the country in a network independent of the Democrats. Kennedy and Humphrey will be forced to go to this network. Is FDP inside or outside the Democratic party--inside or outside of the system. We must offer them a network to tie in with so they can remain outside. The timetable will also get us out of the race with King, SCOPE, etc.

Dona: It seems like the threat of SCLC taking over organizing done by us still remains despite different timetables.

Parris: We need a people conference. If FDP is to survive, they must either hook up with the rest of the South, and the South in turn with the rest of the country or be absorbed into the Democratic Party. The only people willing and able to help them are SNCC and SDS. Dona: The Democrats are going to try to absorb the Negroes in their party this summer. If they succeed, will your suggestion be hopeless?

Stokley: The problem is one of two groups, differently oriented, working in virgin territory.

Scotty: We must try to take advantage of the others after they pull out. We must just keep hanging on.

Courtland: In raising issue of new elections, we must teach people about political participation in this new network. The problem with

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Stokley: NAACP has national organization, but no one organized. With lunch-counter sit-in's have series of victories. In long-range political struggle, no victories.

Silas: Take Bevel's plan to march on the Alabama legislature, and criticize it. instead

Cortland: March on the courthouse ~~in front of~~ of the legislature.

Group: Unclear about when next elections held in Alabama.

Scott: Demonstrate at legislature for proper representation.

Buddy: Could we ~~now~~ cope with free ~~new~~ elections if we got them in 6 to 8 month? Harder to fight black power structure.

Parris: We're working in last half of twentieth century on one of the problems of this century, how people can participate in decisions and meaningful release their energy. Before our century, these concepts impossible. At Atlantic City release of new kind of people in motion. It is important to them keep moving forward. You become qualified as you do. We are in motion; how can we get the other people in motion? In the student movement what was important was that students got into motion and stayed in motion, that they carved out a space for themselves and were not run by the power structure. To get people in motion, first call them together and then regardless of what they want to begin working on, they begin to move. Most political movements depend on a few people who work very hard; we want maximum participation of the people. King doesn't put people in motion. He has separate campaigns.

Bevil: In Montgomery police beat up some ~~now~~ students today. When I met with Watkins, President of Alabama State, he said that if Wallace were off the board of the school, ~~now~~ the President could do a better job. As it stands, the President has to be a "Tome" Legislature just allotted \$22 million to University of Alabama, and \$1 million to Alabama State.

Cortland: How to ~~now~~ raise question of new ~~new~~ elections? Negroes haven't been able to participate in political process. The vote alone is meaningless. If only a few Negroes ~~are~~ in office, they will be isolated individuals who can be bought off and forced to moderate their demands. Congressional challenge calls for the Mississippi Congressmen to be thrown out and for Congress to call for new elections.

Bevil: Can win Congressional challenge only if you have international sentiment opposing racist governments. Strategically important to have 1000's in street ~~the~~ ^{and} and in jail. How many people can you mobilize to make the issue clear?

Parris: Challenge challenges the Establishment. Challenge could have been tied in with the March, but the March need ~~now~~ the cooperation of the Establishment. Result: March implied total problem was Negroes registering and voting. March could only succeed in a vacuum.

Dona: King is tool for mass civil disobedience. Bevel calling for mass confrontation. But King won't let it be a real confrontation.

Cortland: The leaders call for demonstrations and that's what you have.

Dona: Even with Bevel's reasoning, you don't end up with a confrontation. Establishment ~~now~~ tightly controls ~~information~~ information that goes to other nations. control

Bevel: Have to sell idea to enough people and organizations.

Stokley: When you been organizing a county, you're admitted into homes cause you're a civil rights worker.

Parris: Have to get out of bind that ~~now~~ we make the plans and the people wait for our decisions, that we make time-tables and then sell them to the people. Create context in which people can discuss meaning of free elections. SNCC still only calls staff together, ~~now~~ but doesn't call people together. ~~since staff~~ ^{since staff} ~~meets~~

~~now~~ Bevel: Staff's job is to coordinate individual movements. Momentum, pressure, power created when all civil rights groups move together. ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~legislative~~ ^{legislative} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~work~~ ^{work}

Bill: How can we ~~now~~ deal with our own frustrations so we can last for a long-range fight?

Parris: Can't expect people to last in isolation. SNCC and F.D.P. creates its own world which has different kinds of pressures than in the country ~~now~~ in general,

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and ~~processes~~ where workers can get renewed energy. This country tries to push SNCC into position - into a space - which curbs its energies. SNCC tries to create atmosphere that is best for the workers. Is it best for the people? SNCC is organized around work. F.D.P. provides ordered program. If staff here set date for people's conference and brought 3 or 4 people to it, ~~time~~ those people would develop at least one program which the organizers could work on.

Bevel: Breaking large task into series of smaller tasks fights frustration.

Stokley: But you already have your goal - you don't have to build and pick your objectives.

Bill: Become frustrated because ~~now~~ there is no structured program in Alabama. All we can do now is go into the counties.

Silas: Some people need structure, and can't work without ~~xx~~ it. Others just don't work. I find myself in the position of having to create a structured program in order to evaluate staff.

Bill: A program cuts down on this frustration.

Parris: I've suggested a simple program. It will cut down our frustrations. Remember the people don't have our frustrations.

Bevel: Larger context is our general goals. Everyone works within this context. Job of Program Director and/or staff to create structure in which both people and staff can create relationship to these goals.

Bill: Set up structure to deal with things we don't understand. Annie Pearl went to Washington. Some people think she should do whatever ~~x~~ she wants; others are concerned about her.

Cynthia: Annie Pearl feels isolated from the group.

Silas: Let's take some stand on Bob Parris' proposal.

Stokley: SNCC has never been an ~~xxx~~ organization. Don't talk about firing and not firing staff. My frustrations come from staff meetings.

General consensus to hold a People's Conference.

Stu: Hold it Sunday afternoon. Most people work 6 days a week.

Parris: People could miss Church one Sunday, and come for an all-day People's Conference. What about holding it on the second Sunday in May?

The reports will be sent to the following: Tuskegee - April; Miles - May; Taladega - June. Tuskegee: Since March 10th have received a lot of money. Now they have opened up an office. In May, Lowndes, and Miss. they are working. At Alabama State, 10 students want to work in Sumter during summer. I plan to go to Birmingham area and get the 4 Negro colleges together. Draw them into Hale, Sumter, and Greene Counties. At Taladega need someone to help them, more direction. Taladega students want to work in that county. If possible send someone up there to work with them. Southern Regional Conference: To attract Negro and African students. Especially since from certain areas. Will work counties much better. Students from Texas to Virginia to conference. Want enough staff people to attract them to work in certain counties. African students to teach in "Freedom" Schools - African history in their heads. Conference in June, probably in Miss. or Ala. Talked to Hosea - if he brings in SCOPE, will crush a lot of students. Will say don't bring in SCOPE people to certain counties where Negro college students will be working. Hosea agreed to this. Negro regional conference will attract additional students to work in the counties. VISTA program at Tuskegee. Community recreation, tutorial program. How does VISTA tie in with SNCC? VISTA as such (it's part of the War on Poverty program) doesn't work with us. But students in it are free to work with us after finish their eight hour work day. (VISTA - part of the domestic peace corps.) 5 counties in the 3rd Congressional district - Tuskegee area. Lot of students from Tuskegee wouldn't just want to work there. 2nd Tuskegee group called TAL (Tuskegee Action League). TAL is affiliated with SNCC. Lot of students who have spent their weekends and vacations in field and getting orientated to that work in counties means.

Scott: Problems with students who have their own program. Should have students responsive to what people want, not visa versa, i.e. telling people what they should want.

Doug: Are students coming in going to work in right way - find out what people want and then do it.

Silas: Will have more problems with SCOPE than will Negro college students. SCOPE: De-centralized. Each campus sponsors own group which chooses its own county gets its own project director, and devises its own program.

Stokley: People in community don't see the workers as from different groups but just as "civil rights workers" or "freedom fighters". Don't want to create split in community. You have to sit down and discuss different approaches. If other group is going to call demonstrations, there will be demonstrations. Should use the momentum from the demonstrations.

Silas: Discuss projects in various counties. Perry County: George Bess and Terry Shaw. Hale: Annie Pearl, St. Clare Jettor, and Hank. In Hale County they've worked in Akron and Greensboro. Haven't been outside these 2 areas. Is no real project there. Annie Pearl wants the F.D.I. Need some viable program so all this nonsense can't happen again as in Selma.

Stu: Sumter County: Cynthia Washington, Chris Wylie, Avery, Stu House. Had a Freedom Day. Working in Morningstar, Tip Top, and (I missed this name) districts. And have been to Livingston (the county seat). Been going to church, each person to a different church. Passed out some leaflets for Freedom Day. Mostly came out of talking to people, they decided to go to courthouse.

Cynthia: White folks have been saying people can go to register. 3 industries moving in and hiring from 50 to 300 people each. Can organize people around jobs.

Chris: White folks are scared.

Cynthia: No organized groups now or ever before in Sumter County. In Greene County organization headed by O.B. Harris, business man who passed himself off as SNCC worker. 10 Tuskegee students who are natives of Sumter County want to work with us this summer.

Stu: Livingston: Mr. Spears and (I missed this name) had been going down with people and vouching for them when they went down to register. No mass meetings yet.

Mants: People in Lowndes before mass meetings etc. thought Lowndes County was worst county (that is what the local people thought). Needs county network so can say in mass meetings "People in Lowndes County are getting freedom".

Austin: Wilcox County. S.C.L.C. has been conducting marches for last 3 weeks.

ALABAMA STAFF WORKSHOP
April 21-23, '65.

April 21 - 4:00

Silas Norman: A lot of people were supposed to show up for this conference. A guy from F.D.P. in Washington /I missed getting his name), Judy W. from the staff education department of the Atlanta office, and others from Atlanta were coming down. People from the research and photo department of the Atlanta office are here now. At this meeting, it is most crucial to discuss programs. Yesterday in Atlanta, when we met with S.C.L.C., we discussed SCOPE. SCOPE plans to be in all the black belt counties. We SNCC also plan to be in these counties. SCOPE's plan: college students on each campus organize their own group and plan their own program; then they pick a county from the one's S.C.L.C. has decided upon; they come down on their own and go straight to their county. There is no centralized program. Will be same shit as in Selma with a thousand individuals each with their own private program. Leaflets or pamphlets for everyone by SNCC.

Scott B. Smith: What is our relationship to S.C.L.C.?

Silas: Report from the last executive meeting. On the 2nd day it was decided that too many in SNCC floating around and nobody knew where they were. Ruby had list of all staff - evaluated staff person by person. Ruby is going to write to all floaters on what they are doing, and suspend their checks till return equipment of SNCC's that they have. Also at the executive meeting discussed positions on HUAC and its investigations of the Klan, red baiting, Viet Nam, SCOPE. It was decided that HUAC shouldn't investigate any one, even the Klan; that red baiting - we have a program and people in SNCC participate in the program; that Viet Nam - all groups in this country have taken a position on this issue. LBJ has deceived the country and continually escalated the conflict. Consensus - we shouldn't be in Viet Nam. SCOPE /Summer Community Organization and Political Education) will be in Ala., Georgia, S. and N. Car., Vir. In Alabama will be in all the black belt counties, Autauga county, Montgomery, and a few other counties in the 1st district. All in all SCOPE plans to work in one hundred twenty-nine counties and ten major cities. SCOPE will ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ be either in direct conflict or working with our program. SCOPE has called for two thousand students. Will talk to Hosea Williams, head of the SCOPE project, about students not coming into some areas, where we have commitment from negro college students. We will have to ~~radicalize the situation~~ ^{and attack} when white students are there, since there is nothing we can do to keep them out.

Annie Pearl Avery: James Orange is working in Hale County. I'm not going to worry about what he's doing. I'm just going to work my own way.

Stokley Carmichael: You can't ignore other civil rights workers in the same county. If SNCC workers have been working as they should, they will control the students - i.e. the students coming down with SCOPE will have to come to the SNCC workers. The same holds true for King - King will have to go through the SNCC workers. The people will follow King, but he'll still have to go through the SNCC workers.

Annie P.: James Orange didn't ask to come into Hale County. What do I do then - ask him to go out?

Stokley: When S.C.L.C. came, people said, "Do you know Stokley, Bob, Scott B. or Willie?" S.C.L.C. had to go through the SNCC workers.

Scott B.: We have the time to keep on the move so much that they S.C.L.C. can't get in the door.

Stokley: Bevel is right. Not going to have the frustrations we had in Selma in January. S.C.L.C. can mobilize people; it can do it most easily when no program, and no work has been done. We have to have a program - not just talking to people.

Annie P.: People in Hale County have their own organization.

on. If we are working there, then SCOPE has to come to us. Let's talk about SNCC first. Fairly sure we can keep them out of Alabama. If you have a program, then you can fit them into your program. We're not responsible for the students, S.C.L.C. is.

Scott: Rev. Harris turned away from Lowndes county by the people will only come back on invitation. I would like to see Negro college students come down. Why can't we get more students like that.

Silas: There's going to be a SCOPE project - that is the reality of the situation. Today ~~we~~ we were supposed to discuss politics and F.D.P. because Thevall (?) was supposed to be here. Thurs. we were going to discuss SCOPE, and Fri. programs and what each person is doing. Does Ala. need or want F.D.P.? Buddy Tiger from Atlanta research going to give us some information.

Annie P.: Getting F.D.P. started in Ala. will put more pressure on regular Senators and Congressmen. ~~They~~ They will want to get more Negroes into the regular Democratic Party. People in Hale County are being encouraged to go to the courthouse and try to register and then being flunked.

Cynthia: Problem in Alabama: it is not that people can't register and vote. They can do this. But people can't participate in making decisions. Main problem is that people don't have jobs. Would have to start from different basis to make it appeal to the people.

evolved to

Bob Mants: People in Miss. ~~try to join~~ the F.D.P. No people here have gotten shot at or lost jobs cause tried to register. Doesn't create same climate as we in Miss. ~~on back about the same time~~

Annie P.: Three letters sent to people who tried to register to get out of town. Might be just a scare thing, or might be serious.

Scott: Once we hit open season in Lowndes County, we are going to have same type of ~~clash~~ as in Miss. No reaction around Lowndesboro. Powder keg is around Raymond and Fort Deposit.

Silas: In Ala. people ~~want~~ to register to vote and ~~join~~ into the Democratic party. ~~That~~ originated in Miss. can't be transplanted to Ala. ~~Can~~ ~~not~~ evolve out of circumstances of Ala.

Annie P.: People are coming down to register and still are flunked. Test too hard for them. ~~Then~~ voting bill - should bring out issue of ~~the~~ ~~white~~ man's vote. Good time to put pressure on Congressmen and ~~Senate~~ ~~Senate~~ help if some Alabamians were there.

Silas: Position on this voting bill is not important. Thru some other dramatic means ask for other representatives and free elections. Reality - bill is being watered down every day. Won't include free elections.

Annie P.: What do we do after we get the vote. If Negroes are afraid enough of the white man, they will vote as the ~~white~~ man tells them to.

Mants: People there decide their own voting laws since is a democratic country and 5000 Negroes and 1000 whites in Lowndes County.

Martha Predod: Ala. is 50% black. Free elections represent programmatic challenge. Otherwise we can use a more Northern approach.

Tina Harris: Unless you explain to people why the voting bill is ineffective, ~~then~~ you cannot talk of free elections. One follows the other.

Annie P.: Even if they don't chop out part about federal registrars, still have the problem of Negroes living on the white man's land and being afraid of the white man.

Mants: Food and clothing jazz - becomes a welfare state.

Silas: What do we think of getting involved with distributing food and clothing? Discuss techniques of organizing.

Scott: Food and clothing that's coming from the University of Wisconsin is going to Dallas County Voters' League. People stand around the trucks as they're unloading. If we don't get it as it comes in on the trucks, we aren't going to get it.

Mants: I'm against the whole food and clothing jazz, even for staff people. We should live off the community. We're trying to tell people they have nothing to depend upon but themselves.

Stokley: There is already food in Lowndes County. People are going to run to where the food is. People who control the food and clothing are looked to as leaders.

Annie P.: We only gave food to one lady who had been participating in the movement - and to her kids too.

Martha: Is there a way for local people to distribute the food themselves? How to store the food.

Annie P.: Don't want the food-clothing to be used as a bribe to get into the movement.

Mants: Folks in Lowndes County have cows, mules, etc. Can feed themselves. Negroes equate the Lord and the white man cause the white man gives them food. ~~bad psychological effect~~. Want people to rely on themselves.

Stokley: If S.C.L.C. is going to go to Lowndes County with food, then SNCC should give it out. If it's coming in any way, organizers should bring it in. If people can find an easy way to do the same thing, then will do it - i.e. take the food. White ministers get power by giving out food. SNCC should bring it in; SNCC gives it to local movement - their executive movement; they - the exec committee - gives it out.

Doug: Shouldn't the executive committee of the local movement deal directly with Rev Harrison? ~~xxx~~

not
Stokley: No! Will be obligated to Rev Harrison then. Can be more sophisticated with hungry people.

Fay Bellamy: People are going to send food. Got to be realistic about what to do with it.

Eugene Prichard: Rev Howells took truck load ~~xxx~~ of food to Lowndes County today.

Tina: Food comes down. We get it. We'll share it with you just as you share your food with us.

Fay: We can't tell people two Negro organizations have a play of power.

Martha: People are sending food. How best to distribute it so does the least harm.

Silas: We have $\frac{1}{2}$ box car load of food and \$1000 for food. Now people ~~xxx~~ have to fill out forms and stand in lines. If you cut out all that nonsense, people will just take what they need. The forms they have to fill out and the lines they have to stand in make the people greedy.

APRILL 22 - THURSDAY - Morning Session

Silas: In summary of yesterday, Silas made clearer that one of the conditions for calling off the boycott was free elections.

Bevel: What happened to S.C.L.C. staff after the March. Those who'd worked in Alabama in the field saw the March as the beginning of the project. Part of the scheme was calling the boycott - ready to fight. King wanted to call "Victory" and stop with the March. King stopped organization from workin

abolish schools
work to build up in 1961
make common the
right to vote

Boycott wasn't successful
because King was unenthusiastic
he afraid to back administration
on civil rights issue.

on big boycott. Split between S.C.L.C. staff who wanted boycott versus King who didn't. Selma project took a lot of energy out of S.C.L.C. staff. King wanted to rest. Bevel feels should split up decision-making between all action groups - SNCC, Core, etc. So King committed himself to SCOPC so could keep from fighting. King will back up free elections, but he doesn't work out the strategy. S.C.L.C. committed to free elections. So far S.C.L.C. hasn't done anything in terms of the boycott. Next problem: Working out broad ~~xx~~ strategy where everyone can ~~xx~~ work out, all toward common goal. Planning goal and strategy that allows everyone to become committed to it. Strategy - F.D.P. in New Jersey - 1) convention of 3 days doesn't ~~x~~ give you time to build up momentum; 2) also need people protesting in street at same time as representatives trying to get seated. Now in Alabama we need 1) mass demonstrations and 2) elected representatives to sit in government. That is best way to make ~~protests~~ point? With state and federal governments. Want clear-cut picture of blacks (57%) wanting in government versus white-racist government. Also need business men to be putting pressure on Johnson to let ~~black~~ blacks in government so boycott called off. Time element: honor this boycott; F.D.P. challenge, when schools ~~xxx~~ turn out - kids will join movement if movement is in progress. Whenever demonstrations start in Montgomery it will take 4 to 6 weeks to build to a peak. Organise so can continue to develop. Also want to ~~xx~~ make protest to world - example: if Wallace makes ~~xxxxxx~~ arrests of 1000's of Negroes, African nations will join in boycott. Also strength in towns to disrupt business.

Cynthia: Eight weeks not time to educate people and build grass roots organization so can participate in decisions once Negroes in government.

Bevel: Process of learning ~~xx~~ accelerated ~~xx~~ during demonstrations in the street

~~xx~~ Austin: People leading themselves? i.e. deciding that they want to do this

Bevel: People in local communities will become educated via demonstrations. Those that learn ~~xxxxx~~ fastest will be leaders. What does he mean by free elections? White people going to have to choose between eating and fucking around with Negroes. Want federal government to come in here, register Negroes, ~~xxxxx~~ throw out present government as un-Constitutional. What question is this going to pose to the world? Show that this government in Alabama and Miss. isn't a democratic government. Alabama is the ninth ~~xxxx~~ biggest state in exporting in the country. Everything they make is sent to the colored nations. Most foreign ships that service Alabama fly the Algerian flag. Why do we beat blacks ~~xx~~ for wanting to participate in the ~~xx~~ government? LBJ can't say he's passing a voting bill, because we're talking about participating in government.

Doug: You are the rightest focus going to deal with ~~xx~~ our fight?

Bevel: Can not fight violently cause we go on promise that we value human life. International opinion on our side by armed men hitting unarmed. like Hitler, etc.

Cortland: Plan to have people in individual counties picket courthouse to say these elections shouldn't be held, elections should be held in 6 to 8 months. We emphasize the people working in their counties rather than mass king of things.

Bevel: To get U.S. to give us real democracy, going to need other nations on [] LBJ's back to do something. Don't have the staff to cover all the counties at [] the same time.

Kind

Dona Richardson: Bevel's talk of "motion" misleading. ~~King~~ of motion he's talking about will have people going to certain point and stopping. That is more meaningful is having fewer people willing to go all the way.

Bevel: My concept of education. Kind of climate that will enable people to go deeper. Some teachers can do in 2 days what others can't do in a year.

Cortland: Question of free elections secondary to question of political participation

Stu House: How do you orientate people ~~xxxxx~~ about values? If people learn to participate, then they will be watching their representatives to see if they are being sold out. There's the schoolroom?

Silas: Now we're in 6 counties (Perry county not included). Also campus traveler program.

Bill Hall: Report on campus traveler program. Conference held at Tuskegee in March. Students decided would set up student union. Need communication with one another. Will go back and continue to work in their respective communities and counties. Will send ~~xxxxxx~~ reports to central office and it will send reports

The reports will be sent to the following: Tuskegee - April; Miles - May; Tala-doga - June. Tuskegee: Since March 10th have received a lot of money. Now they have opened up an office. In Marion, Lowndes, and Miss. they are working. At Alabama State, 10 students want to work in Sumter during summer. I plan to go to Birmingham area and get the 4 Negro colleges together. Draw them into Hale, Sumter, and Greene Counties. At Taladoga need someone to help them, more direction. Taladoga students want to work in that county. If possible send someone up there to work with them.

Southern Regional Conference: To attract Negro and African students. Especially since from certain areas. Will work counties much better. Students from Texas to Virginia to conference. Want enough staff people to attract them to work in certain counties. African students to teach in "Freedom" Schools - African history in their heads. Conference in June, probably in Miss. or Ala. Talked to. Hosca - if he brings in SCOPE, will crush a lot of students. Will say don't bring in SCOPE people to certain counties where Negro college students will be working. Hosca agreed to this. Hope regional conference will attract additional students to work in the counties. VISTA program at Tuskegee. Community recreation, tutorial program. How does VISTA tie in with SNCC? VISTA as such (it's part of the War on Poverty program) doesn't work with us. But students in it are free to work with us after finish their eight hour work day. (VISTA - part of the domestic peace corps.) 5 counties in the 3rd Congressional district - Tuskegee area. Lot of students from Tuskegee wouldn't just want to work there. 2nd Tuskegee group called TAL (Tuskegee Action League). TAL is affiliated with SNCC. Lot of students who have spent their weekends and vacations in field and getting orientated to that work in counties means.

Scott: Problems with students who have their own program. Should have students responsive to what people want, not visa versa, i.e. telling people what they should want.

Doug: Are students coming in going to work in right way - find out what people want and then do it.

Silas: Will have more problems with SCOPE than will Negro college students. SCOPE: De-centralized. Each campus sponsors own group which chooses its own county gets its own project director, and devises its own program.

Stokley: People in community don't see the workers as from different groups but just as "civil rights workers" or "freedom fighters". Don't want to create split in community. You have to sit down and discuss different approaches. If other group is going to call demonstrations, there will be demonstrations. Should use the momentum from the demonstrations.

Silas: Discuss projects in various counties. Perry County: George Boss and Terry Shaw. Hale: Annie Pearl, St. Clare Jettor, and Hank. In Hale County they've worked in Akron and Greensboro. Haven't been outside these 2 areas. Is no real project there. Annie Pearl wants the F.D.R. Need some viable program so all this nonsense can't happen again as in Selma.

Stu: Sumpter County: Cynthia Washington, Chris Wylie, Avery, Stu House. Had a Freedom Day. Working in Morningstar, Tip Top, and (I missed this name) districts. And have been to Livingston (the county seat). Been going to church, each person to a different church. Passed out some leaflets for Freedom Day. Mostly came out of talking to people, they decided to go to courthouse.

Cynthia: White folks have been saying people can go to register. 3 industries moving in and hiring from 50 to 300 people each. Can organize people around jobs.

Chris: White folks are scared.

Cynthia: No organized groups now or ever before in Sumter County. In Greene County organization headed by O.B. Harris, business man who passed himself off as SNCC worker. 10 Tuskegee students who are natives of Sumter County want to work with us this summer.

Stu: Livingston: Mr. Spears and (I missed this name) had been going down with people and vouching for them when they went down to register. No mass meetings yet.

Mants: People in Lowndes before mass meetings etc. thought Lowndes County was worst county (that is what the local people thought). Needs county network so can say in mass meetings "People in Lowndes County are getting freedom".

Austin: Wilcox County. S.C.L.C. has been conducting marches for last 3 weeks.

Local people have been coming to SNCC saying they don't want to march. S.C.L.C. won't have a joint meeting with the local organization and/or SNCC.

George: If you can't get together with S.C.L.C., then it's your obligation as a SNCC worker to organize the people and find out what they want. We should stick to our jobs. Ask the Civic League, "What do you want to do?"

Eric: How do you approach people about organization?

Silas: S.C.L.C. doesn't know what to do with Rev (I missed his name). They have left him in Wilcox county on his own.

Austin: We're working in Gee's Bend, Low Price Street, and Sloc Hill. People have been going to Camden from Gee's Bend and Coy to take part in the demonstrations; there are almost no Negroes in Camden.

Stokley: Report on Lowndes County. Workers L Stokley, Bob Mants, Scott B. Smith, Willie Vaughn, Judy Richardson. Before SNCC went to Lowndes County, Bevel, Andy Young and 3 other S.C.L.C. people called a meeting at Croby's store. 20 local people came to the meeting. S.C.L.C. said the movement is coming. At the meeting they elected officers, who now form the executive committee of the local organization in Lowndes County. SNCC came to Lowndes County the day after Irs. Luizo was shot. SNCC decided to work the whole county to get around the organization that was already set up. Luckily the people in the executive committee turned out to be strong people. What SNCC has accomplished so far: 1) Have set up a library which the students asked for. The principal at the high school leverages high fees for the use of the school library and on text books. 2) 300 people have tried to register. On the 1st day the registrars only took 16 people. 3) The executive committee decided not to accept free food and clothing from Selma because they should take care of themselves. 4) Has meetings every Sunday night with about 500 ~~invited~~ people between the 2 meetings. People from Lowndes went to the Democratic Conference in Montgomery. They asked "Wallace is in the Democratic Party - how do plan to ~~force~~ force him out?" The Democratic Conference, which is going to be held in Birmingham in the near future, invited all registered voters from Lowndes to attend. Since only 6 people are registered, the executive committee decided to send anyone who wanted to go. We have a Freedom house in Trickem and in Hayneville. Two people will live in each house. We are working the whole county. The real trouble is going to come out of Hayneville and Fort Deposit. Fort Deposit is the biggest town in the county.

Scott: We need radio contact with Selma. So that people won't be scared to try to register, we told them that if their welfare checks were cut off, the local welfare people would lose their jobs and the federal government would pull out of the state. Fort Deposit is the raw nerve.

April 22 - Thursday - Afternoon Session

Silas: Alabama project operating solely off of contributions. Too much money spent for gas. Don't charge any more gas if possible. Staff on subsistence adopted from the North. Get communities you're working in to support you. *for us!*

Annie P.: Report on Hale County Project. I talk to people about F.D.P. and voter registration ~~so~~ I don't talk about things that would conflict with what S.C.L.C. is doing. In Akron the local people are canvassing, transporting people to the polls, and teaching people to help them pass the tests. Yesterday 17 passed. The registrar is giving hard and different tests, opens the courtroom for registration for only 1 or 2 days, makes people stand for hours waiting and ~~then~~ then rushes them thru the tests. S.C.L.C. called a mass meeting in McCall's Church. S.C.L.C. holding 1st demonstration next week in Greensburg. Rev. McCallum agrees with me that local people -not leaders- should talk at their own mass meetings.

Stokley: S.C.L.C. has opened churches in Hale County where SNCC couldn't. S.C.L.C. will have demonstrations whenever they call for them.

Annie P.: I wouldn't participate in S.C.L.C.-called demonstrations. I'll transport people to them and wouldn't talk against ~~them~~ their demonstrating.

Silas: Annie P. operates whole program in Hale. If the Hale County Project decides to operate a program such as ~~is~~ an F.D.P. in Hale County, it ~~now~~ has to explain it to SNCC staff.

St. Clair: I'm usually with Annie P. because of one car etc. To organize county do you first run around thru whole county country or concentrate in Akron, a town

lets be realistic - if Negroes ever become elected
who will control them? not moderate, tell them
what to do, point fingers & not moderate, tell them
what "we" want them to do, freedom ride?
what about the mass meeting for freedom?

for your bill in capitol
to your state, tell
not you to tell them
not P.D.P. you
understand.

Annie Pearl and St. Clair: Talk to people about using same techniques F.D.P. used and how F.D.P. operates. If Ala. people in Washington talking to Congressmen about "One man - One vote", more pressure on voting bill.

Dona: Importance of F.D.P. is that creates context in which people have control of their representatives once they get into office. If we don't create this context, will have same thing as in North once we get Negroes in office.

Annie P.: I have to react to what the people are reacting to, which right now is the issue of demonstrating. S.C.L.C. will come in after SNCC does ground work. All S.C.L.C. has is King and Reverends.

Stokley: S.C.L.C.: Major decisions should be made at the top. They also are dedicated and work hard. When they create atmosphere, we can't do everything we want to do. When they go into county, find local leaders that they can work thru.. Dishonest - local minister lets them wheel and deal.

Dona: SNCC operates like S.C.L.C.; decisions made at top. But our politics different. King and Andy Young confer with LBJ. Bevel and SNCC doesn't.

Annie P.: Everyone in S.C.L.C. has to agree with King. Our biggest mistake: SNCC people, who weren't working in Ala., meet with S.C.L.C. and committed SNCC to things which Ala. staff had to then carry out.

Cortland: King's use - to speak to whites.

Stokley: To Negroes in Alabama it was their march. Unfortunate that they didn't control it and that it was called a victory. - because Telm [unclear] but asked to say real [unclear] making a kingdom.

Annie P.: People in Hale County saying, "King is leading them a good march". Thinking same thing we're thinking. How do we know redemptions?

Chris: Can't fuck with King - he can do no wrong.

Dill Hall: We should exploit King. Should talk to S.C.L.C.; SCOPE result of lack of communication.

Annie P.: Our mistake last time was we weren't together. King knows SNCC will break ground and then S.C.L.C. can go in. King wants to keep position where he can talk to LBJ.

Dona: You don't have to work on or respond to a march or demonstration just cause people get excited about them as they're happening. What happens to the people after. We get into a fight whenever we try to work with S.C.L.C. on a march.

Chris: We're split down the middle. On the one hand, we say we're not joining the March, while John Lewis and half the staff goes on the March. On other hand, when we say we're against the march and King's in Selma, we're on the side of the devil.

Doug: What did the SNCC workers do in Lowndes County so that they don't have to worry about S.C.L.C. coming in?

Chris: S.C.L.C. got people rallied up thru the march and the killings. Then SNCC went in and organized.

Scott: We got the people to realize they could organize themselves and run their own movement. In working with the people, we tell the truth, for if you lie to them they'll catch you in the lie. People in community know who they can talk to if something happens - both among civil rights workers and local people.

Mants: If King comes to Lowndes, he'll have to deal with local organization.

Scott: We live in the county. People know we're there. People from Sumpter county coming to our mass meeting.

Bob Parris: Workshops for people in different counties to get together. Their problems are not county-problems, but are more generally more wide-spread. If the direction really comes from the bottom, the people have to get together and hash out what they think are their problems.

Mants: People not conscious enough of their own problems in their own county to be ready to talk to people of other counties. For example, a lot of people don't realize what board of registrars are doing to them.

Cynthia: Local people know what their problems are, just don't know what to do about them.

Parris: People conferences could let people discuss their problems over a long-range period. Since their problems, their needs are ~~big~~ bigger than county-wide, they will want to call people's conferences. Organizers raise certain questions; people develop answers. Organizers have different problems than people.

Silas: Report on Montgomery office. Workers: Larry Fox, Fred Healy, Will Ricks, Randy. Working with Alabama State students. Report on Dallas County. Only have contact in Selma, none in the county. Prior to Jan 2, 3 people here. No program. Around Jan. 2, 2 people went to Ferry County. Now this office supposed to be resource center for whole state. Staff: Willie Emma Scott, Susan and Elmo Holder. Only Holder's and Silas not local. Keep all workers in Dallas County local. Try to work in the county. 15,000 ~~eligible~~ Negroes eligible to vote in Dallas County. Lack of communication and information between staff.

Gerald: Folks in Wilcox ~~wk~~ asked me to find people who've been discriminated against for the annual Civil Rights Commission Hearings in Montgomery on May 19 thru 21.

Scott: Need radios ~~for~~ for communication, information on civil rights issues and the law. People, not knowing about the boycott, ~~and~~ are going to Selma to shop.

Cynthia: Could write to each other to communicate. Mail or ship by bus supplies.

Chris: Law students in Selma? Short-wave radios?

Silas: The deal with the law students feel through.

Mants: Have staff meetings with lawyers and other professionals to get ~~information~~ information. What is our relationship to and what exactly are the Alabama Democratic Conference and the Alabama Coordinating (I missed the rest of the name)?

Scott: I need to see an outside newspaper.

Martha: Staff newsletter including: what ~~x~~ Ala. staff is doing; general news; educational material such as information on civil rights laws.

Silas: Morty Shiff coming May 1 to install radios, with Will Rogers helping.

Parris

~~xxxxx~~: What are the basic tools of organizing?

Gerald: Through talking to ~~folks~~, get a feel for the community. Secure a church, or a home for meetings. The leaders will be ahead of the other people.

Silas: Dallas County Voters' League made up of a few people in Selma, none from the counties. This is a local organization that doesn't represent the local people. Any comments?

Dona: Can't build organization by getting ~~xx~~ small number of people together and immediately forming an executive committee. 1st have ~~xxx~~ lots of meetings. When achieved broad base, then can elect officers.

Silas: Let's think about and work toward people's conferences. Don't know when the people are going to say they're ready.

Parris: Either you make initial decision about people's conference, and let it snowball from there; or you ~~wait~~ wait for the people to call the 1st one.

Dona: If you have 30 people at the 1st conference, they'll want to meet again. There's your snowball.

Doug: How do you organize the meeting itself.

Dona: In past people have tried to offer information, and still not overly structure the meeting.

Doug: 1st deal with local problems, then international issues.

Dona: At a conference in Cleveland, from discussion of national and international politics, people began to deal with their own problems.

Scott: I would put ~~xx~~ into person's mind idea of calling People's Conference by talking about similarities of issues in all the counties. Get him into mainstream by relating national and international issues to ~~his~~ his life.

Dona: Be honest. The local people you know are friends of yours. Ask them to do things as you would ask a friend. For example: "We have an office in Meridian. Do you want to go and take a look at it?"

Cynthia: Communities don't stop at county lines.

Doug: Can we get in position so we're not racing against other organizations?

Parris: The top people in this country operate in 1000's of organizations simultaneously; but the ~~poor~~ poor have no voice, no organization. SNCC field workers can ~~help~~ help people set up their own organizations (not set up affiliates of SNCC in all the counties). 1st you ~~x~~ have to call people together.

Dona: SCOPE has no program. Shouldn't get scared of plans on paper.

Cynthia: At executive meeting, many people scared and upset ~~were~~ about SCOPE. Powers in country trying to create split between CORE, SNCC, S.C.L.C.

Parris: Once people ~~get~~ have idea of people's conferences, they will want to make provisions for carrying this through.

Dona: We can't make a program, ~~but~~ because unable to relate to idea of people deciding for themselves. Fear of other programs.

Parris: We're in position of selling to people idea of people deciding for themselves. People in USA build organizations to make space in which they can work. You want to work yourself out of the organization and work the people in. Practical steps: Instead of your calling ~~the~~ the meetings, and your talking to the people yourself, take a local person along with you as you canvass, and have a local person call and chair the 1st meeting. Keep yourself ~~from~~ from being chairman of first meeting.

Mants: 1st county mass meetings. Afterwards inter-county meetings.

Parris: Bevel and King could make F.D.P. challenge confrontation with LBJ. King always gets credit. ~~xx~~ Miss. and New Jersey were exception; King can in after F.D.P. already there, and he was sure it'd be a success. For next staff meeting, staff members prepare information on specific issues other staff interested in. Many kids out of school. Freedom schools: run freedom Schools all over county one day to get idea off the ground. Some kids will be interested in ~~doing~~ teaching. Could discuss: should they stay out of school?; what can they do if they are out or in school? SNCC staff call students together to find out what they want.

Mants: One of our problems is we don't listen to the people.

Stu: Non-violent philosophies. Can't fight the white man, cause it's his freedom too we're talking about.

Chris: Ridiculous to talk of nonviolence to man who's been beaten by a white man.

Elmo: It's true that there are big bastards on top, but there're little bastards on the bottom! I can see non-violence as a tactic, but not as a principle.

Mants: If a man comes into my house, ~~I'll~~ I'll let him kill me. I don't want to kill anyone.

Parris: S.C.L.C.'s idea of nonviolence is to have people talk about it. If, on other hand, organize people into organizations where they can express themselves and make decisions, channel off frustrations and tensions that make people act violently. SNCC accused of acting violently. But we are doing grass-roots community organizing. American Medical Society reports ~~xx~~ violence in Negro community decreases went movement in progress. If the North, they don't ~~x~~ want to hear nonviolent philosophy. Respond to Muslims etc. These two alternatives aren't necessary. New York riots can be viewed as the failure of civil rights workers to organize the Negroes into ~~an~~ effective organization. Negroes in Harlem find themselves in a vacuum.

*if clearly a revolution
it reforms and changes no go*