

SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE'S

Summer Community Organization and Political Education Program
563 Johnson Avenue, N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
President

Mr. Hosea L. Williams,
Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Summer Community Organization and Political Education Volunteers for 1966

FROM: Mr. Hosea L. Williams, Director, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Department of Voter Registration and Political Education, SCOPE Division

SUBJECT: SCOPE for 1966

Dear Freedom Fighters,

I'm asking you for just a few moments of your time. These few moments may be the most important moments of your whole life. These few moments could mean the difference between poverty and wealth; it may mean the difference between ignorance and a quality education; it may mean the difference between slavery or freedom. These few moments I'm asking of you may mean the difference between peace and war; even life and death; yes, even Heaven and Hell.

The few moments that I ask of you is the amount of time that it will take you to study and comprehend the information contained in this memorandum.

Words will never be able to express the success of SCOPE last summer. I doubt seriously whether there will ever be a poem or a song or even a picture that would portray the beauty and the significance of last summer's Summer Community Organization and Political Education program sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President and Hosea L. Williams, Director.

For the first time in the history of this nation, hundreds of black and white from every walk of life, from every section of the county, lived with, ate with, suffered with and sacrificed with thousands of destitute black men, women and children the length and breadth of the Southland.

For the first time in this nation's history, thousands of deprived Negroes across the Southland met for the first time, decent, sincere and dedicated white people that had a genuine concern for their problem.

Truly, the building of the "Grand Alliance" was begun, and with the concern of the thousands that will work in this year's Summer Community Organization and Political Education program, the "Great Society" is inevitable.

WHAT IS SCOPE?

SCOPE is the summer project of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. It has three primary objectives--mass voter registration, political education and community organization. SCOPE volun-

teers come mainly from colleges and universities, although citizens at large (doctors, truck drivers, nurses and maids) are also recruited. There are some few organizations, churches and labor unions that have organized SCOPE Chapters.

SCLC attempted to organize SCOPE Chapters on every college campus possible. Due to the lack of time, finances and personnel, all colleges were not attempted last year. This year an attempt will be made to organize SCOPE Chapters on additional college campuses due to the experienced persons that volunteered for SCOPE last summer participating in the recruiting program.

The establishment of a SCOPE Chapter on a college campus is usually done by the dean's office, the chaplain's office or persons interested in human rights. A SCOPE Chapter may or may not be an official organ of its college or university. Some administrations prefer the SCOPE Chapter's activities to come under its auspices, others feel differently. An organized SCOPE Chapter consists of a director, a chairman, a secretary, a treasurer and chairman for the following standing committees: fund raising, recruiting, screening, orientation, voter registration, political education, community organization, field program and publicity. The screening committee consisting of representation from the president of the student body's office, the chaplain's office and the dean's office has proven expedient.

Weekly orientation sessions will be held by the SCOPE Chapters on their respective campuses. At all SCOPE volunteers will be oriented for seven days, some place in the South before they are sent out on the field to work for a ten week period.

Fund raising will be one of the most important functions of the SCOPE Chapter. Due to the lack of funds, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference must require each of the SCOPE Chapters to raise the necessary funds for transporting their members South, room and board for their members during the ten week period and for transporting their members back home at the close of the summer program.

The SCOPE program will extend from Virginia through North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

Volunteers will be recruited from all sections of the country. Special emphasis will be put on the South, particularly the all-Negro and all-white colleges.

SCOPE Chapters may offer one of the four following services. First, it may adopt one or more Southern counties to work in permanently. The first summer's activities will be directly under the guidance of SCLC's experienced staff. After the summer program is closed, the Chapter would be expected to send in a research team to answer the question as to what program would be most suitable for meeting the needs of that specific county. Then the SCOPE Chapter would be expected to keep some staff in that county carrying on operations for a year around program. At this point, SCLC's staff will continue to assist in carrying out the program, but in a subordinate capacity. Secondly, a SCOPE Chapter may select a black-belt county to work in just through the summer program. Thirdly, a SCOPE Chapter may choose to send persons to SCLC to be assigned for the summer; and fourthly, a SCOPE Chapter may choose just to raise funds to finance the SCOPE Program and to help defray the expenses of poor Southern Negroes and poor Southern whites that would not be able to share this great experience.

ORGANIZING ON THE CAMPUS

The first step on each campus is to organize a campus SCOPE group which will be a long-term campus organization formed to recruit students, screen volunteers, organize a SCOPE project unit, raise money, and continue in the years ahead to organize projects for their county or counties in the South. This organization should have a chairman, a secretary, a treasurer, a publicity agent, and members, active and advisory. The group should form four committees; recruitment, screening of volunteers, finances, and publicity.

There are many ways to recruit students. Posters, brochures and buttons are available from SCLC in Atlanta. Films on voter registration, political education and civil rights are also available to show at small meetings of interested persons. In many cases it may be necessary to hold larger mass meetings to activate students. SCLC will try to send friends of SCLC who are well known for their role in the struggle for human rights and would be willing to address recruitment mass meetings. SCLC will contact these persons if asked. Advertisements or articles in campus newspapers and spots on the campus radio station have proven effective. Religious, social and international groups are usually very cooperative in introducing the program to their members. These are just a few suggested approaches. Since every college differs, the local recruitment committee will be the best judge of the methods to use on their campus. Persons of all skills are needed in the SCOPE Project. In order to handle the correspondence, bookkeeping and general paper work connected with the SCOPE Project, at least fifteen volunteers will be needed in Atlanta SCLC headquarters. For this reason contact should be made with the larger community to interest particularly typists and teachers in the project. Persons who wish to apply as individuals rather than as members of a unit should send applications directly to SCLC, Atlanta.

When the campus SCOPE chapter has recruited a number of volunteers, a SCOPE Project unit should be formed. This is the unit that will work in the "adopted" county during the summer. It should have a director.

A screening committee of four or five persons, faculty members and students, should be formed to consider all applications. Names, addresses and phone numbers of screening committee members should be sent to SCLC in Atlanta. SCOPE application forms will then be mailed to the committee chairman. Everyone who is interested in working can be of help, so screening committees should not be overly rigorous in their judging of volunteers. Working on civil rights in the South requires dedication, courage, and maturity; however these qualities can and have been acquired by seemingly dilettant young college students. Any person old enough to go to college is old enough to work on voter registration--Negro high school students have formed the backbone of the voter registration projects throughout the South. No person is too old--in several Southern communities white persons over seventy years of age have participated in much more strenuous civil rights demonstrations. Everyone who will work is needed. It will be up to the screening committee to weed out persons whom they feel are incorrigible or impossible to work with. All completed application forms should be sent to the SCOPE headquarters at SCLC, Atlanta before mid-April for a final check. In the event that a SCOPE worker turns out to be a persistent trouble-maker, SCLC will retain the right to dissociate him from the project.

When the campus SCOPE Project has recruited a number of volunteers, a SCOPE unit should be formed. This is the unit that will work in the "adopted" county during the summer. It should have a director, secretary, treasurer, etc., depending upon the size of the unit, and be organized to work in the county. The names, addresses and phone numbers of these administrative personnel should be sent to SCLC, Atlanta.

MONEY AND MATERIALS

A major problem of each SCOPE unit, as with all civil rights groups, is finances. This year, SCLC's budget is extremely limited. Therefore, each volunteer will have to bear his own personal expenses. These include:

1. Transportation from home to the week-long orientation in Atlanta.
2. Transportation from Atlanta to assigned county.
3. \$8.00 per person per week for ten weeks for room and board.
4. Transportation from project home.

The SCOPE Project will need, ideally, a car for each six SCOPE workers. Cars are needed in the counties to assist in transporting persons to and from the registrar's office. Some counties will have local transportation, but the more cars available for this work, the better. Because it is always a large expense, SCLC will help with the responsibility of gasoline and oil.

SCOPE Project units should equip themselves with the basic office equipment such as typewriters, mimeograph machine (if possible), and as many supplies such as paper, pencils, pens, chalk, blackboards, etc. as possible. These essentials are necessary to conduct adult citizenship classes and political education programs. SCLC will incur the expense of materials used on the project such as posters, fliers and buttons.

FUND RAISING

It is hoped that each SCOPE unit will be able to raise the funds needed to carry on the project. Several methods for raising these funds can be employed. Each SCOPE unit should conduct a "SCOPE Fund Drive" on campus. This will not only give wider publicity to SCOPE, but will also permit those unable to give their summer to contribute financially. Campus drives might include the sale of SCOPE buttons at \$1.00 each (they can be purchased from the Atlanta office at \$.10 each) door-to-door requests for assistance, major civil rights leaders speaking on campus (you will have to pay their expenses incurred in coming to your school), concerts given by the SCLC-SCOPE Freedom Singers, or the showing of citizenship movies ("Right Now", "Knock on Every Door", "Count", "Voter Registration Drive"). Financial aid might also be sought from the student government, political clubs, individual classes, religious organizations and all other campus organizations and groups which have funds or access to funds. In short, the SCOPE Project should be thoroughly explained and financial support requested of all persons and organizations on campus

The campus SCOPE chapter should also make contact with the surrounding community. Again, the process of explanation and request for support should occur. This contact will not only assist in the financing of SCOPE this summer, but will also provide a significant breakthrough by spreading information about the work being done in the South. Faculty members will be particularly helpful in establishing contacts in the local communities. Local churches, labor groups and business organizations and campus hang-outs might be a good starting point in the campus-community fund raising phase.

Finally, campus SCOPE members should contact their home communities. Many students will return home for spring vacation; at this time they could contact churches, labor groups, business organizations and personal friends in an effort to raise money for their SCOPE unit. This will allow people in home communities to gain knowledge of the civil rights movement and contribute to it.

It is usually easier to get contributions from individuals if they have a definite idea of what their contribution will pay for. For example, the idea of having persons pay for so many miles of voter registration

at 2¢ a mile for gas may be helpful.

NECESSARY BACKGROUND

To help prepare SCOPE workers for the summer, SCLC has drawn up a required reading list: The People Who Walk in Darkness by Shulte Norholte, Southern Politics by V.O. Key, Jr., Freedom Road by Howard Fast and How to Win, COPE (AFL-CIO). All of the above are available in paper back. This reading list, however, is minimal. Supplementary reading from a more extensive list is available from SCLC in Atlanta.

Workers should also familiarize themselves with the federal aid programs; SCLC is in the process of compiling a kit which includes information on the Job Corps, Community Action Projects and Neighborhood Youth Corps of the Economic Opportunity Act. A working knowledge of these programs is necessary if SCOPE units are to help initiate projects in their "adopted" counties. It might be helpful for SCOPE Project units to hold discussion sessions in order to share insights and questions. This will also help build a working relationship among the members.

COUNTY SET-UP

Campus SCOPE Chapters should inform the SCLC Atlanta office of the approximate number of volunteers they will send. SCLC will then send a suggested project county list and the chapter will select a county. Upon notification of the selection, SCLC will supply basic information on the adopted county. Local chapters should then write the recommended county's leaders to establish initial contact.

During the spring the SCLC staff will visit all projected counties. They will set up offices and equip them with desks, chairs, voter registration and political education materials, maps, etc. SCLC staff will also work with local leaders and organizations in preparing the counties for the summer. They will secure housing for volunteers and conduct ground work in finding local volunteers to assist SCOPE workers. High school volunteer workers will play a significant part. In many counties it has been high school students who have done the bulk of the voter registration work. These students will be invaluable in helping SCOPE Project workers.

ORIENTATION

SCOPE Project workers will report for orientation session on June 17th. These sessions will consist of intensive classes conducted by SCLC staff and other recognized civil rights authorities.

Orientation will proceed on the assumption that all required and some supplementary reading has been done by all workers. Areas to be covered in the session include:

1. Procedure and problems in voter registration
2. General theory and practice of Southern politics (history, state elections, laws, etc.)
3. Present structure and needed changes in Southern economics
4. Federal aid programs (Hill-Burton Act, Economic Opportunity Act, Small Business Loans, etc.)
5. The applications and implications of non-violence
6. The citizenship education program of the movement

These sessions will allow time for creative discussion and questions between volunteers and orientation staff.

On June 23rd workers will travel to their field assignments. Workers will then meet local leaders, get offices organized and get the feel of their communities.

VOTER REGISTRATION

Top priority in the SCOPE Project will be given to voter registration. The SCOPE unit will work hand-in-hand with the local organization. (SCLC affiliate, voters league, improvement association, etc.) on this phase of the project. Canvassing will be done by teams of two, one SCOPE worker and one local volunteer, or two local volunteers. Canvassing kits will be supplied by the Atlanta SCLC office. Cars will be needed to transport persons to the registrar's office. The local organization will be expected to get local people to volunteer to use their cars for this purpose. Unfortunately, this will not always be possible, since most of the local people will be poor and unable to afford to drive their cars without getting some money for gas. With this in mind, it is hoped that the SCOPE workers will be able to pledge a certain number of miles in voter registration work. Gas money is the largest single expense in any voter registration project; SCOPE units are urged to carefully consider their county in advance and attempt to raise funds for this part of the program. SCLC has summaries of state election laws for the states being worked and sample questionnaires. They will be sent to campus SCOPE project groups once they have been assigned a county.

POLITICAL AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Due to the years of exclusion from the democratic governing process, it is essential that a political education program be carried out in each county worked by a SCOPE unit. This program will consist of training in basic political organizations. It will include teaching precinct level politics, techniques of voter registration, and methods of getting out the vote. Materials and curriculum will be supplied by the Atlanta office. At the orientation session SCOPE workers will be given the basic training needed to organize and teach these classes.

The South has a crushing problem of adult illiteracy. In Georgia alone almost half of the Negro population over twenty-five is functionally illiterate (has less than four years of formal education). In an effort to meet this need, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference several years ago set up a Citizenship Education Program that is now successfully operating in eleven Southern states. SCOPE workers with teaching ability will be asked to volunteer as citizenship school teachers. Materials and curriculum will be supplied by the Citizenship Education Department of SCLC and workers wishing to volunteer as teachers will receive training at the orientation session. Each teacher will hold two classes a week in local homes. The standard curriculum covers basic skills in arithmetic, reading and writing, the American system of government, and fundamentals of economics such as writing checks, banking and budgeting. Each campus SCOPE group should inform the Atlanta office of how many members of their unit will be willing to act as citizenship school teachers so that preparations can be made to have sufficient materials available.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

In many of the counties covered by the SCOPE Project the average individual income for Negroes is less than one thousand dollars a year. Although President Johnson considers three thousand dollars a year the poverty line, the "War on Poverty" will never reach these people without outside assistance. This is due to the recalcitrance of the local white power structure. SCOPE workers should familiarize themselves with the Economic Opportunity Act and particularly the sections of it dealing with Community Action Programs and Neighborhood Youth Corps projects. Brochures on these programs are available from the Federal government. Information on how to obtain these, plus information on how to set about organizing projects in a community is in the kit on Federal aid programs from the Atlanta SCLC office. In each county SCOPE workers will need to work with local Negroes to analyze the particular problems of the community and formulate plans for an effective program. It is important at this point to get the

support of influential local whites if the programs are to succeed. This will take diplomacy and dedication to the reconciling principles of non-violence, but it will be possible in some counties.

TUTORIAL PROGRAMS

Some colleges may wish to include a tutorial program in their SCOPE Project. This would be a program designed to give Negro grade school and/or high school students a part of the education that they have been denied as Negroes in a Southern community. Programs of this sort will have to be left entirely to interested colleges, since SCLC does not have the materials or curriculum necessary. However, a college interested in setting up a tutorial program can be supplied with the names and addresses of persons who have conducted such programs successfully in the South.

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

In every county the local organization will supply the vital link between the SCOPE workers and the Negro community as a whole. It will assist workers in voter registration and other projects, give and seek advice on a multitude of problems, recruit volunteers, organize mass meetings, and try to provide cars for voter registration work. If the SCOPE Project is to be a real success, SCOPE workers need to remember that their primary objective is to help create dynamic local leadership in the form of persons and groups that will continue to attack the problems of their community in the years ahead.

COOPERATION WITH SCLC STAFF

Although emphasis is placed on the autonomy of the local SCOPE units, trained SCLC field staff will help the units get functioning in their communities. SCLC field supervisors will be stationed in each four county area throughout the summer. They will assist SCOPE units, act as trouble shooters if problems arise. SCOPE units will be expected to submit weekly reports to headquarters in Atlanta so that individual programs can be assessed, and help can be sent to needy areas.

For additional information write:

SCLC-SCOPE
563 Johnson Avenue N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30312
522-1420

Additional suggested reading:

The Negro in Politics - Price
Balance of Power - Henry Moon
Purlie Victorious - Ossie Davis
The Souls of Black Folk - W.E.B. DuBois
Biography of Frederick Douglas - Phillip Foner
Peace, Prejudice and Class - Oliver Wendell Cox
The Fire Next Time - James Baldwin
Crisis in Black and White - Charles E. Silberman

Additional orientation topics:

Living conditions in the South
Attitudes, self discipline, protection and security
Detailed information about communities
Community organization problems
Problems faced by Northerners working in the South
Philosophy of non-violence