

STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
197 $\frac{1}{2}$  Auburn Avenue, N.E.  
Atlanta 3, Georgia

STAFF MEETING -- October 8-10, 1961

Chairman: Charles Jones  
Recorder: Sandra Cason

Structure:

The following resolution was adopted to clarify the structure of SNCC as it assumed the function of initiating long-range programs rather than simply coordinating local groups.

There will be a temporary executive committee set up which will consist of:

1. Miss Ella Baker
2. Mr. Harry Belafonte
3. Miss Connie Curry
4. Mr. Charles McDew
5. (2 members of Voter Registration staff)
- 6.
7. (2 members of Direct Action staff)
- 8.

The staff will be answerable to this committee. The committee should have monthly meetings. A staff meeting can be called by the committee at any time. The chairman of SNCC is responsible for calling meetings of the executive committee. Five members, three of which must be students, constitute a quorum. The committee shall work on a revision of the Statement of Purpose which will be subject to approval by the conference. The committee will be responsible for income and expenditure of finances and will submit a financial statement at each SNCC meeting. The committee should draw up the type of report they need from the staff. Financial reports from the administrative secretaries must be submitted monthly. The committee should draw up a budget.

The executive committee is mandated to work deliberately to expand and democratize the organization of SNCC, to seek the development of a functioning communications system which will clarify the nature of the movement to the country, and to provide students with stimulus and strategic information.

The temporary executive committee shall obtain a lawyer to clarify the legal status of SNCC and is empowered to do whatever is necessary for effective implementation of the program of SNCC. The actions of the temporary executive committee between SNCC meetings shall be accounted for in writing and are subject to approval of SNCC at its bi-monthly meeting. As one method of democratizing SNCC, the temporary executive committee is urged to consider the following resolution adopted.

1. That this meeting select two staff members to work on the presentation of a list of five people from each Southern state to the Temporary Executive Committee to be approved by SNCC.
2. SNCC would then select two or three people from each state to be presented to the student governments and local protest groups of Negro colleges in that state, with the stipulation that the governments be responsible within a given period of time for having the students select one of these persons to act as state representatives to SNCC.
3. That these representatives, together with selected adults and members of the staff, form SNCC.
4. That the relationship between the staff and this committee be worked out by the Temporary Executive Committee to be approved by SNCC.

Immediate Plans for McComb County:

After a discussion and review of the McComb situation, particularly the students' actions there and SNCC's responsibility, the staff decided to call Charles McDew, who had remained in McComb, to ascertain the plans of the students and to decide strategy. He reported that the students at Burgland High School plan to present a petition to the school administrators at Burgland asking for the readmission of Brenda Travis immediately upon her release and the readmission of Isaac Lewis at the beginning of the second semester. If this is refused, the students at Burgland, Magnolia, and Hattiesburg High Schools will walk out of school, remaining on campus. Charles met with them on Sunday for some training in non-violence and will meet with them again on Tuesday to discuss future plans. Brenda Travis is now in the Colored Girls Industrial School in Oaklie, Mississippi. In addition, Police Chief George Guy suggested to Dr. Harrison that a bi-racial committee might be formed to study the situation, and ten Negro teachers have committed themselves to supporting voter registration publicly and attempting to involve other Negro leaders in the area in the same commitment. Immediate plans were formulated:

1. Telegrams asking for Brenda Travis' release and readmission will be sent to Governor Barnett, Judge Brumfield, and Attorney General Kennedy.
2. Phone calls will be made to Martin Luther King and Harry Belafonte asking for telegrams to Brenda and informing them of the situation in McComb.
3. A mailing to the SNCC constituency will inform them of the Voter Registration Program in the three counties and ask for letters and telegrams to Supt. Simpson, Governor Barnett, and Miss Travis.
4. Attempts will be made via Mr. Belafonte and the ADA to get a telegram to Brenda from Mr. Kennedy.
5. Mr. Harry Belafonte will attempt to get publicity on McComb by holding a press conference.
6. Photographers will be at the school on Tuesday from CBS.
7. Bob Moses and Charles Jones will return to McComb.

(Later developments: Miss Travis will be readmitted. Students were asked to sign statements stating that they were asking for readmission and that they know they will be expelled if another walkout occurs. The students will not sign, but will return to school on Wednesday after leaving statements on the principal's desk. Bob Moses and Dion Diamond returned to McComb.)

#### Voter Registration Program:

The project in McComb is the first step in an expanding program. The program is an attempt to (1) expose the civil rights situation in the Deep South; (2) involve the Justice Department in suits and thus provide security for registrants; (3) register voters; (4) involve a growing number of people in full time commitment to civil rights in the South. Coordination with other agencies is being maintained-- the Justice Department, the Legal Defense Fund, SCLC, and Negro civil rights leaders and public figures in New York.

It is unlikely that registrations can occur in Amite or Walthal counties; perhaps the best that can be hoped for there is exposure of the situation and legal action. Pike County is better, and work there on registration should be continued. Marion and Walthal residents may attempt to run schools themselves if SNCC can send someone in for a few weeks to help them set schools up. It was decided that it might not be wise to send everyone back to McComb because Jackson State and Tugaloo students can be involved for weekend schools and canvassing, and the situation in McComb is so tense. Also, staff is needed in other areas where the program is to begin: Terrel County, Georgia; the Thirteenth Congressional District of Mississippi (Delta area--13 counties); and Central Alabama. Three people will be sent to McComb permanently to help residents register, pay poll taxes, and accustom themselves to classes. Decisions on further action there will be left to these three.

#### Direct Action Program:

The Direct Action Staff plans to concentrate its efforts on the March on Mississippi Project (MOM). Support for local areas and coordination of local areas will come from SNCC, which will continue to be a representative body when it is reconstituted. Each SNCC representative will be responsible for his state, as before, and the Atlanta office staff will work with them as well as with the field staff.

The MOM plan will hopefully have as its results: (1) the development of a statewide and indigenous nonviolent movement in Mississippi; (2) the focus of national and international attention on Mississippi as a focal point of the injustice in the whole South; (3) the stimulation of state and federal power structures toward some action; (4) a statewide attack on the power structure of the state of Mississippi, since the state is itself a structure dedicated to segregation; MOM is an initial project in that direction.

The SNCC staff's role in local areas will be to give the residents hope that the problem can be solved (to act as a catalyst), and to train students for leadership in local situations. The local groups which will have been set in action will be depended on for

continuing efforts when the SNCC Direct Action Staff have been jailed following the project.

The plan follows:

The aims of D-Day are to get people to support righteousness, to get the government to stand on the U.S. Constitution, and to attain full citizenship for all U.S. citizens. D-Day will dramatize the oppression suffered in the South and will seek to focus the attention of people upon the injustices. As all nonviolent demonstrations, it will seek to change the hearts of people.

The following objectives will be asked of the Mississippi government:

1. A permanent, bi-racial Civil Rights Commission in the state of Mississippi with an adequate staff and budget.
2. A Fair Employment Practices Commission for the state.
3. Immediate integration of all state-supported schools.
4. Immediate integration of all tax-supported institutions-- parks, libraries, city auditorium, etc.
5. Abolition of poll taxes and literacy tests for voting.
6. Equal opportunity in all civil service and government jobs.
7. That the school board be bi-racial.
8. That all segregation laws be stricken from the books.
9. That all charges against demonstrators be dropped.
10. That the minimum wage law be enforced.
11. Abolition of the "filibuster rule".

The following will be asked of the federal government:

1. A permanent Civil Rights Commission with adequate staff and budget.
2. That the President issue a 20th century Emancipation Proclamation and uphold the Constitution.
3. That power be invested in the proper authority to make arrests and to enforce civil rights laws.
4. That there be a national FEPC.
5. That the President put the moral weight of his office against racial segregation in the U.S.
6. That the minimum wage law be enforced.
7. That charges against demonstrators all over the country be dropped.

Preparations for D-Day:

There will be an initial meeting of high school and college class presidents in Jackson.

Organization: There shall be a Jackson Strategy Committee consisting of staff and local people. Further organization shall be determined by the Strategy Committee.

Education: includes workshops and mass meetings by authorities (religious, sociological, etc.); an intensive study of Christ, Gandhi, etc.; films, audio-visual aids, tapes, etc. Cities for developing groups: Jackson, Biloxi, Natchez, Meridian, Vicksburg, Clarksdale, Greenwood, Greenville, Holly Springs, Brook Haven, McComb, Laurel.

**Preparations:**

- Arrange plans for dealing with repercussions (e.g., discuss emergency food plan with Kennedy); the field secretary will develop and disseminate a list of contact individuals and organizations for use in emergency situations.
- Apprise all civil rights organizations.
- Brief the press.
- Brief liberal congressment.
- Line up personalities to participate in demonstrations.
- Contact foreign students and embassies.
- Contact U.N. delegation.
- Contact Elks, etc.
- Invite Nehru to U.S. (Direct Action group will try to get him to speak during his visit in Kansas City.)
- Try to line up political leaders (mayors, governors, etc.) to speak out.
- Arrange telegram campaign to Kennedy.
- Alert all Freedom Riders.
- Public relations will be handled by the field secretary and the Atlanta public relations person. SNCC will begin to build press relations now.

The question of SNCC's relationship to other groups in preparation for MOM will be referred to the Temporary Executive Committee, with special emphasis on the relation of SNCC and SCLC.

In addition to the MOM Project, the Direct Action Staff plans action for November 1st--testing the ICC ruling in terminals. The staff will find persons, not necessarily staff, who will participate in the testing under SNCC's banner. Diane Nash and Charles Sherrod will be appointed to the Freedom Ride Coordinating Committee and will contact other members to see if coordination can be set up between SNCC and other groups. The Direct Action staff will form plans for the rides.

Discussion of possible demonstrations on December 25th and January 2nd was postponed until the Direct Action staff had finalized their plans for presentation.

Role of the Field Secretaries, Executive Secretary, and Chairman in Relation to Field Staff:

Initial discussion brought out the following points:

1. Field secretaries and field staff should maintain constant contact.
2. Field secretaries should be responsible for providing their staffs with what resources they need.
3. Field staff should send weekly reports to the field secretary and the Atlanta office, the form for the reports to be developed by the Temporary Executive Committee.
4. The field secretaries should be responsible for the safety of their staff.
5. Field secretaries will coordinate their staffs; the Executive Secretary will coordinate the two staffs.

6. The field secretaries will be responsible for the administration of field offices.

It was moved and passed that the TEC present at the next SNCC meeting copies of a proposal which defines the roles and functions of officers of SNCC, the duties and field practices of staff, the relationship of the field staff to the field secretaries and to SNCC, and the procedures for hiring and firing of future personnel. Within the proposal shall be the stipulation that any complaint to dismiss a staff worker must be presented in writing to the TEC, which upon a two-thirds vote may dismiss that person; any staff person may appeal his dismissal to a joint hearing before SNCC, the TEC, and the staff. A majority decision will prevail. Pending a decision by the TEC and, if appealed, the joint hearing, the actions of the staff person shall be held in abeyance. If a person has been reinstated after a dismissal and joint hearing, his back salary will be restored; if he is dismissed, he will be given two weeks' pay.

#### Relationship of Voter Registration and Direct Action Projects:

It was agreed that SNCC is a unit, but that there are differences between the two projects:

1. Some of the money being received is for voter registration specifically.
2. Voter registration has federal government protection that direct action does not have.
3. Voter registration has the commitment of Roy Wilkins while direct action does not.
4. Voter registration will involve direct action in Mississippi, but the emphasis of voter registration is political, while that of direct action is spiritual.
5. The programs are different.

Relationships will develop in specific situations, but generally it can be stated that:

1. Voter Registration will be coming in contact with young people. When they are ready for action the Direct Action staff should send someone in.
2. The above implies extensive consultation between groups.
3. Direct Action staff must look for people interested in voter registration and call in the Voter Registration staff.
4. Both staffs must constantly look for local people to carry on when they leave.

It was moved and passed that:

1. Money raised by SNCC, with the exception of money specifically earmarked for special projects, be raised for the total SNCC program.
2. That these available funds be allocated where they are needed most.
3. That the voter registration and direct action wings supplement each other's activities as much as possible in a manner to be spelled out by the TEC.

Appointment of Staff to Temporary Executive Committee:

Members from the Voter Registration staff will be Bob Moses and Charles Jones. First alternate is John Hardy; second alternate, Reginald Robinson. Members from the Direct Action staff will be James Bevel and Diane Nash. Alternate is Bernard LaFayette.

Assignment of Staff Personnel:

Direct Action:

Direct Action staff is comprised of Paul Brooks, James Bevel, Diane Nash, Lester McKinney, Jim Foreman. Bernard LaFayette is currently on that staff, but may transfer to the Voter Registration staff. The TEC members will remain in Atlanta, and the others will go back to Jackson immediately. One person will be responsible for setting up an office in Jackson. All staff will work out of Jackson, but final decisions on assignments to specific towns will be made in Jackson when the whole staff has met there and will be mailed to Atlanta. The first two days in Jackson will be spent working out travel plans and educational programs.

Voter Registration:

1. In McComb, Mississippi, people are needed to contact and work with the students, to work with the adults on registration, and to keep the office (records, coordinating of state effort, contact with Atlanta office).
2. A report is needed on the Thirteenth Congressional District in Mississippi (Delta area). The report would include economic situation there, climate of the people, adult local leadership information, etc. There is a possibility that churches there can be renovated; a Clarksdale group may donate the money needed to renovate one church for use as an office (\$1800 needed).
3. The same sort of report is needed on the middle district of Alabama.
4. In Terrell County, Georgia, (Albany) someone is needed to set up classes, contacts with local people. The college there has about 100 students ready to work in this and surrounding counties. They are also ready for direct action programming.
5. Marion County, Mississippi, is ready to provide its own leadership after about two weeks work by SNCC. There are similar counties surrounding Marion.
6. Someone is needed to recruit competent and mature people to initiate these and similar projects in several other states.

On the basis of these needs, the following assignments were made:

1. Travis Brett and Gwen Green will either go back to McComb, where Gwen will handle office administration or will work in the middle Alabama district.
2. Charles Sherrod will work in Terrell County.
3. Dion Diamond will go with Charles Sherrod when and if he can leave McComb.
4. Bob Moses will remain in McComb.

5. Cordell Regan will go to Terrell County.
6. Reginald Robinson will work on recruitment. The motion was made and passed that an expanded plan for recruitment be developed and presented to the TEC. The plan would be a three-month experiment in visiting local groups.
7. Charles McDew will return to Atlanta for two weeks to work in the office.
8. Charles Jones will remain relatively free to set up an office and public relations channels, work on fund raising, Student Voice, and answering mail. He and Charles McDew will work together.
9. John Hardy will go to Marion County, Mississippi.

Bob Zellner: Role to be defined by the TEC. Suggestions: work with the Direct Action staff in areas where they are locating, recruit on white campuses, some work in citizenship schools to show Negroes there is some white sympathy.

Office Staff:

The whole staff is to begin work on finding a permanent Executive Secretary. Salyn McCollum is to be contacted to see if she can work as office secretary. Julian Bond is interested in working on the Student Voice. Tom Hayden has offered to do some writing. These two will be asked to begin to set up the paper, define its editorial policy, and start getting it out to the current mailing list. (List should be expanded by staff as they develop contacts.) The staff should do some writing. The TEC will be asked to work out financial status for these two.

(Additional minutes follow)