

REPORT

TO: COORDINATING COMMITTEE and SCEF
FROM: SAM C. SHIRAH, JR.
RE: WHITE SOUTHERN STUDENT PROJECT (SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 1963)

This is a brief report, to the Southern Conference Educational Fund and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, concerning, the grant from SCEF to SNCC for the purpose of working with white Southern students and interesting them in the movement. Let me begin by making a few remarks concerning the project and its purposes as I see it.

I began this project with no one program. Indeed there had never been developed a very pragmatic program of how to reach the Southern white student, at least not that I know of. My first objective was that of experimentation with some of my ideas as to how to approach the southern white student. I wanted to develop a program or many programs that would reach the southern student and develop a movement within the campus and then spread to the communities. This is still my first objective. It is one of trial and error.

This was my objective in general. In specific it was pretty much the same aims that Bob Zellner has projected. That is:

1. Contact white students on southern campuses.
2. Interpret student movement to them.
3. Inspire and interest them.
4. Interest them in some sort of constructive action.
5. Aid the students in contacting Negro students.
6. Aid them in meeting the leaders in the area.
7. Acquaint them with the organizations that are active in the movement and their publications.
8. Acquaint them with some of the leaders in the movement.
9. Aid them in relating themselves to the problems in their area in some kind of action.
10. Indicate some areas of technique of action.

As a matter of achievement in carrying out this program that I began in September of this year. I would like to report that I have visited about 20 colleges in the South. This does not include several colleges visited outside the south, mainly in Ohio. The states that I have touched so far are: Alabama, South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Florida and Louisiana.

I began the project in Birmingham after the bombing on September 15th. There I worked with a group of students at Birmingham Southern College and Miles College. This group has had a lot of trouble but is still "holding on."

Then I went into South Carolina and made many contacts and found many good people. One of the white students there attended our Fall Conference in Washington. There are many others that I worked with that are still moving. Several have been in close contact with Guy Carawan and have been down to Johns' Island. I ran into many problems there which I shall not go into at this time. They center mainly around the white liberals and the NAACP. I learned much from my visit to that state.

Then I attended a voter registration workshop in Johns' Island, after which I went on a speaking tour for the National Council of Churches through, Ohio. Upon finishing that I began working in Louisville, Kentucky. I helped to organize a group of students at the University of Louisville called the Students for Peace and Freedom. Jim Williams is the head of that group. There were several representatives from it at the Washington Conference. It is a strong group and wishes to affiliate with SNCC.

From Kentucky I went into Florida. At Tallahassee a group called SNAG was formed (SNAG stands for Student Nonviolent Action Group.) I helped them to develop a direct action project and was arrested there while working with them. They also wish to affiliate with SNCC. One of the members of the group are working full time for SNCC now, in the Atlanta office.

I went from Tallahassee to Gainesville and visited the University of Florida. I found some very radical whites there. This group is very strong and may wish to affiliate with SNCC soon.

From Florida I went to New Orleans. There is a strong group there at Tulane. Kathy Cade is there working with that group.

This brought me up to the Fall Conference and because it was so close to the Christmas Holidays I decided not to go back to the field until the colleges

reopened. I intended to go to Boston and discuss the project with Zellner and to collect my thoughts. I got things up before going to Boston but did succeed in doing a lot of evaluating of the project and my work. I intend to do an extensive analysis paper by the end of the school year.

Anyway here are some of my recommendations:

1. That SNCC see this project as, just as important as any other project.
2. That SNCC hire additional people to work in the project as teams.
3. That these teams work in specific areas of the South, that is one team in Georgia, Florida and South Carolina, one team in North Carolina, Virginia, one team in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana and so on.
4. That SNCC furnish these people with cars.
5. That SNCC creat an advisory group for these people to meet with and discuss the project. Ann Braden, Jim Forman and Bobbi Yancey, etc..