

Memo to: S. N. C. C. Executive Committee  
Re: S. N. C. C. Mississippi Project  
From: Bob Moses

I. Cronology for the past two years:

S. N. C. C. began a voter registration project in McComb in July, 1961, and quickly expanded it to cover a three county area—Pike, Amite and Walthall counties. After an abortive direct action campaign in McComb, we pulled out of the area in November, 1961. During this time we joined S.C.L.C. and C.O.R.E. in a program in Jackson in August, 1961, maintaining a base in Jackson until winter of 1962.

During the winter of '61-'62, we worked with R.L.T. Smith in his campaign for Congress and helped the Mississippi Free Press for the first two or three months of its existence. The Smith campaign provided a natural opportunity to expand the voting work already begun in what was then the 4th congressional district. We made contacts in Hinds, Adams, Jefferson, Claiborne, Copiah, and Lincoln counties.

In February, 1962, we helped draft a program for the Council of Federated Organizations and provided them with two S.N.C.C. field workers to begin a project in Hattiesburg. Curtis Hayes and Hollis Watkins were assigned to Hattisburg and worked there until September, 1962, when the project was turned over to a local person, Mrs. Victoria Gray. Mrs. Gray ran the project until March, 1963, when it was stopped temporarily. This project was resumed in July, '63, by John O'Neal and Carl Johnson.

We began the summer of '62 with voter registration projects in the Mississippi Delta as a part of the Council of Federated Organizations. S.N.C.C. workers

were stationed in Vicksburg, Greenville, Cleveland, Ruleville, Greenwood and Holly Springs. These projects are still in operation, with the exception of Vicksburg.

I. The following facts are indisputable:

A. We have accomplished the following:

1. The recruitment and involvement of people from Mississippi; some adults, but mostly young people, in S.N.C.C.'s programs in Mississippi and elsewhere.
2. The establishment of "beachheads" or bases for operation in a number of towns and counties in Mississippi.
3. Gained the confidence of many local Negro leaders in the validity of S.N.C.C.'s program.
4. Provided considerable material for suits by the U. S. Department of Justice against Mississippi voting laws and practices designed to keep Negroes from voting.

B. We have learned the following:

1. It is not possible for us to register Negroes in Mississippi. (There is reason to believe that authorities in Mississippi will force a show-down over the right to vote in large numbers similar to the Federal-State show-downs over integration of schools.)
2. All direct action campaigns for integration have had their backs broken by sentencing prisoners to long jail terms and requiring excessive bail. It has not proved possible to get large enough numbers of people committed to staying in jail, or long enough money to overcome these two obstacles.
3. It is expensive to operate in Mississippi.

III. The core of the problem:

The Mississippi monolith has successfully survived the Freedom Rides, James Meredith at Ole Miss, and the assassination of Medgar Evers, without substantive change. The election of Paul Johnson reinforces all that is bad in the state: the full resources of the state will continue to be at the disposal of local authorities to fight civil rights gains; the entire white population will continue to be the Klan.

The only attack worth making is an attack aimed at the overthrow of the existing political structures of the state. They must be torn down completely to make way for new ones. The focus of such an attack must be on the vote and the Delta of Mississippi, including Jackson and Vicksburg.

IV. I propose that the S.N.C.C. adopt the following program for Mississippi:

That S.N.C.C. make its National Headquarters in Greenwood, Mississippi, starting this fall. That Jim Forman, John Lewis and other members of the executive committee spend considerable chunks of time in Mississippi during the coming year.

That S.N.C.C. launch a ~~one-man-one-vote~~ campaign for Mississippi aimed at obtaining the vote in Mississippi by 1964.

That S.N.C.C. organize local political clubs to support a Negro for Congress from the 2nd congressional district and, if possible, a Negro from the 3rd congressional district. That it begin and continue an unceasing operation against the seating of Jamie Whitten as Congressman from the Delta.

That it begin, now, to explore the ways and means of ousting Senator Eastland in the 1966 Senatorial elections.

That it begin now to explore ways and means of electing militant Negroes to local offices in Mississippi in the 1967 elections.