

COUNCIL OF FEDERATED ORGANIZATIONS
1017 Lynch Street
Jackson, Mississippi

WORK STUDY PROJECT

THE REASONS FOR A "WORK STUDY" PROJECT

The Work Study project was devised to provide a meaningful solution to the conflict which now exists between the inclinations of young people to continue their education and to become involved in the civil rights movement, with its pressing needs for manpower. The program seeks to resolve this conflict by integrating the two activities of field work in civil rights, and academic training in the form of study led by graduate students and other well qualified people. Many who would otherwise have taken a year out of school to work in the movement have not been willing to do so because of their fear of losing scholarships or not being able to earn money for the following year's tuition. For this reason the program also offers scholarships to its participants in order that they might be assured the following year's tuition.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRESENT PROGRAM:

There are several very positive aspects of the project as it has operated so far. Close observers can testify to the growth of the participants in the program. They are much more resourceful and responsible as workers than they were at the beginning of the program. They show initiative and can be relied on to begin and carry through projects. One of the most impressive aspects of growth has been in their ever-increasing ability to express themselves concerning the current political, social and economic issues. The project has been unquestionably successful in its ability to supply the civil rights movement with additional staff to carry out its activities. The participants themselves speak of having a new incentive for continuing their higher education. Taken together these achievements of the program add up to the beginning of a new value and concept in our society; that of the creation of a more meaningful form of education which does not separate the practical and the theoretical, but rather realizes that for study to have meaning and pertinence it must grow out of and remain close to the real life, field situation.

PLANS FOR AN EXPANDED PROGRAM:

This coming academic year SNCC would like to expand the program in order to reach many more students and involve more Negro colleges across the nation.

- A. Work program: The participants would be divided into teams in order to man various SNCC projects across the South.
- B. Study Institutes: They would come together for four study institutes to be planned by the SNCC educational staff.

CURRICULUM FOR THE STUDY INSTITUTES:

An example of a particularly stimulating group of discussions in this year's program were those centered around the issue of Free Speech. Mr. J.R. Actermann, of the Tougaloo History Department, and Mendy Samstein, who has an M.A. in history from Cornell University, led discussions of the history of Free Speech in Europe. Oscar Chase, graduate of Yale Law school, gave a quick summary of some of the more famous Free Speech cases in American History, while Dona Richards Moses, who has a B.A. in philosophy from the University of Chicago led discussions of the opinions of Justices Brandeis and Holmes in some of the more relevant cases. (The last three discussion leaders mentioned are SNCC field secretaries.) In this discussion John Stuart Mill's philosophy was introduced as having been influential on the American view of Free Speech and the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights. This series of classes culminated in a very successful discussion in which the group participated enthusiastically. They expressed opinions on such issues as why Freedom of Speech is desirable or crucial in a democracy. They were encouraged to explore the questions in terms of the relationship of liberty to order. Spontaneous discussions have led to the groups' awareness of some very broad and philosophical questions relevant to their lives.

We hope the staff of the Institutes will develop new approaches to understanding the complex problems which face these students. (e.g. See the attached outline for classes at the Summer Freedom Schhols for Mississippi.)

PLANS FOR WORK PROGRAMS:

The students will be divided into teams. Each team will work under the direction of an experienced SNCC field secretary. This year's participants helped organize for the Hattiesburg Freedom Day and remained there afterwards to continue to rally around the picket line. (The picket line still continues.) Some of the members of the group are working to organize the Mississippi Student Union as a result of their work in Hattiesburg. Others are doing research and writing speeches and organizing for the Freedom campaigns of the candidates for the U.S. Congress and the Senate. In other words, their activities will by no means be concentrated solely around demonstrations. They will learn to be organizers for the increasingly complicated work of the civil rights movement.

SOME GOALS OF THE WORK STUDY PROJECT:

In general what we are interested in doing is creating among the participants an awareness of themselves in relation to the very large complex problems of the society in which they live. Economics, Politics, Sociology and History

among other things will show themselves in the form of real problems instead of as "disciplines" unrelated to life in general and more specifically, to the lives of the student workers involved. We can anticipate on the basis of this year's program that our most substantial achievement will be to whet the appetite of these young people for further study, along with providing a new incentive and added meaning to the learning experience. It is for this reason and the fact that the Work Study project affords colleges involved an opportunity to become involved in the community, that Tougaloo College and SNCC initiated such a program, and that other Colleges have now expressed interest.