

[1964]

## SOME PROPOSALS FOR A MISSISSIPPI SUMMER PROJECT

1. Summer Project Office. A summer project office has been set up in Jackson. An eight person steering committee will head up the project. The summer office would be responsible for:
  - a. Recruitment of Negro students to staff the project.
  - b. Locating housing and facilities around the state.
  - c. Recruitment of students in Mississippi to attend Freedom Schools.
  - d. Processing of applications and selection of summer project staff.
  - e. Programming of area - assignment of staff to specific project in specific areas.
  - f. Coordinating relations for the project.
  - g. Public relations for the project.
  - h. Handling all correspondence in connection with the project.
  - i. Aid in developing Freedom Schools and Community Center programs.
  - j. Preparing for orientation workshops.

2. Program. The summer project will be divided into three areas: Freedom Schools, Community Centers, and Voter Registration. (Further thought must be given to the possibilities for a research project, a law student project, and a project in white communities).

a. Freedom Schools. Attempts will be made to set up as many of these schools as realistically can be made to work. A high student-teacher ratio will be established. (It has been suggested that the average Freedom School have fifty students and fifteen teachers.) The majority of the schools might follow a general curriculum. (See the Charlie Cobb memorandum). Further details might be worked out with Howard Zinn and Mrs. Baker. In addition, a number of special Freedom Schools might be set up. There might be one state-wide school, possibly at Tougaloo, which would serve advanced students (students who would be 22 by 1967 so as to be eligible to run for state and local offices.) The curriculum would give emphasis to the humanities and political sciences. Further, there might be a special Freedom School geared to high school drop-outs in an effort to prepare them for the high school equivalency test.

Students for the Freedom Schools would be recruited by local staff, by local people involved in the movement, and by general contact with teachers and ministers. A brochure would be drawn up for distribution around the state in an effort to generate awareness of the schools and their programs. In addition, Sam Block, who will be serving primarily as a recruiter of staff from Negro college campuses, would be on the look-out for prospective students for the schools.

b. Community Centers. Community centers, like Freedom Schools, might be set up in as many cities as facilities, housing, and suitable staff might permit. The almost thirty thousand books now in storage in Greenwood would be dispersed to these centers around the state. Detailed programs for these centers would be developed by Jesse Morris in conjunction with Carrol Merrit and Claude Weaver, both of whom are working in a pilot community center project in Canton. There is a possibility that the World Council of Churches in conjunction with the National Council might send a number of Europeans and Africans accustomed to working under hostile political conditions, to staff the centers. In addition, the Commission on Race and Religion is considering assigning six seminary students to work with SNCC for a nine month period. The community center program might be an excellent project for them to work in. Further



the Commission has indicated that it has property in Mississippi which it might consider leasing to SNCC. This might considerably alleviate the problem of locating facilities for the centers.

Efforts might be made to recruit experienced teachers, social workers, nurses, etx., to staff the centers. The centers would provide instruction in pre-natal care, infant care, and general hygiene. They would provide a cultural program for the community - movies, dramatics, dancing, music. They would offer an adult education program. They would provide training in typing, stenography, and other skills depending on whether instructors could be recruited. They would serve as centers for political education and political organization. In short, they would provide a structure for funneling a whole battery of programs into Negro communities.

c. Voter Registration. Voter Registration workers would be involved in a general campaign to: 1) get as many people as possible to attempt to register; 2) continue a campaign which we expect to initiate this February, to register over 40,000 Negroes on COFO's independently established poll books. This Freedom Registration campaign will involve setting up local registrars in every precinct in Mississippi with registration books resembling as much as possible the official books of the state. Requirements for freedom registration would be limited to age and residency qualifications; 3) obtain signatures of registered voters on petitions to qualify Negroes to run as official candidates in the November general elections; 4) campaign for these candidates.

There will be a number of ways that registration workers will be dispersed around the state: 1) every rural county would have a four man team. Wherever possible, attempts would be made to find housing in the county (we already have a commitment to accept four workers in Amite. But if housing could not be found, the four man teams could work the county while based in a nearby urban area; 2) workers for general urban people in each fair-sized city; 3) saturation areas. There would be two, or possibly three cities, where a massive number of student, roughly 100, would be concentrated. Three possible areas would be Jackson, Meridian, and Greenville. 4) mobile units. There would be fifteen cars, carrying approximately sixty people. These fifteen cars would be divided into smaller groups and located in the different congressional districts. Their function would be to move in crisis areas.