

REPORT

FROM: JIM MONSONIS
TO: SNCC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
RE: NEW YORK OFFICE

This is an analysis of the activity of the New York office during the past year and a projection for the coming year. It is not a formal report on fund-raising and other activity but rather presentation of the general picture as the New York staff sees it and what we would like for the coming year.

The New York office is rather unique within SNCC. It is not a "Friends of SNCC" such as exists in other cities, but rather has staff which is directly responsible to the Atlanta office and who carry out functions somewhat different than do the other Friends groups, as far as I understand them. At the same time there are a number of Friends groups in New York City and in the surrounding area which we try to relate to and provide help for.

A brief description of the kind of things we do would include fund-raising, of various kinds: through public events such as concerts and rallies, through fund-raising appeals at meetings where we are invited to speak, through encouragement of other groups to do fund-raising for us, through fund-raising parties, and miscellaneous other methods, we have been indirectly or directly responsible for around \$90,000. from the New York community during 1963. About two-thirds of this is the direct result of the New York office. Other activities which absorb a large amount of the staff time in New York are education -- speaking to any and all groups who want to know about SNCC and what we are and are doing. We have never had a chance this year to actively solicit invitations to speak, but have simply responded to those that come to us, and even then have averaged a half-dozen occasions a week. A third area of work is in handling the needs and problems of SNCC staff who come to New York for various reasons. During the summer, for instance, the matter of providing vacations for people took a great deal of work, and more recently following the Washington conference, somewhere around 40 staff persons came to New York--almost all of them with some kind of problem.

This work has been carried out with one staff persons during most of the year, and two since September. Although we have excellent cooperation from volunteers, and from an informal steering committee, there is a limit to what volunteers can do. For one thing, they tend to be transient; after working regularly and hard for a few weeks or so they tend to disappear. For another thing, the bulk of them come in on a sporadic basis and can handle only the more routine work.

We would like to propose an expansion of the New York Office. We would like to see the office expanded to four staff persons who would have the following functions (these are general descriptions):

a) Two overall directors: the two present staff persons--whose functions would overlap, somewhat: Julia P. Petyman will be generally in charge of fund-raising coordination, and I would be generally in charge of educational and more political functions.

b) A person with extensive experience in the Southern movement, who is knowledgeable, articulate, and personable, to handle various speaking engagements and situations where we need to have a major speaker. The person should be a Negro who can get along equally well with high school students (it is surprising how much support comes from high school students), wealthy people, upper middle class white ex-radicals, Negro bourgeoisie, labor officials, etc.. He should also be able to handle more directly political work as described below.

c) A person with office skills to act as general office manager, handle volunteers, routine office matters, etc.

On the basis of this expanded staff, we see the goals and program of the New York office during the coming year as follows:

1) fund raising. This year with inadequate staff, no organization, and no reputation in the City, we raised a good deal of money. We expect to raise during the coming year around \$200,000 gross, with an estimate of perhaps \$30,000 as the expense involved. This leaves a good balance.

We don't think this will involve any radical change in the kind of fund raising we have been doing. We will continue to sponsor concerts and public events such as rallies. We have a number of these in planning at the moment. In addition, a volunteer group of professional fund-raisers who have arranged two very lucrative cocktail parties for us (totalling \$25,000) plan to continue working this coming year, providing we supply them with adequate secretarial help.

We do however plan to do two things in addition to these already developed patterns. The first is to develop a pledge whereby persons will be encouraged to make regular ~~and more~~ contributions (more on this later). The second is to make effort to get SNCC included in the annual budgets of a ~~wide~~ range of social, political, and religious organizations which up to now we have not had time to cultivate. We hope through these methods to establish as much of the income of SNCC as possible on a regular (as opposed to event-centered) basis.

2) Education. Despite the number of speaking engagements we have filled, the fact still remains that SNCC is all but unknown in the New York area. Liberals know us vaguely; the so-called radical community somewhat better; students fairly well. But we have made little inroad into the Negro community as yet. And although we have very good relations with the mass communications media we need to develop that systematically until we get regular coverage in the press etc. The importance of these things need not be stated here. We need to do a good deal of work on this, and have several ideas. Especially we need to communicate to people that we need financial and material help.

The situation in New York is very open to us. The NAACP has lost to a large extent whatever hold it may have had among the younger and/or more politically conscious Negroes in the City with the election last year of a ministerial group as the officers. Because of the sloppy work of some local CORE chapters during the past year, it appears that CORE has to a large extent alienated itself from the mass of New Yorkers. Without even trying to tackle New York problems, we can get a good hearing among all sorts of groups in New York. But it will take work.

3) Political activity. It seems clear that at this time it would not be advisable for us to get involved in action on New York's problems. But there are other forms of political action in support of the South that we could easily carry out. Demonstrations in connection with some particularly disturbing event in the South have taken place occasionally and could be easily stepped up. (As little known as we are at the present, we can get 500-1000 persons out for a demonstration now). More complex but equally necessary work involves dealing with various corporate heads whose offices are in New York but whose plants are in the South--and if and as possible ~~and~~ necessary, organization of boycotts, work stoppages with sympathetic union locals, etc.. This has not as yet been done in any satisfactory fashion but is something ~~we~~ we would like to tackle; we have friends in unions and other organizations who can supply the necessary technical knowledge to carry out some real action on this level. A third area of concern which we have just begun to explore is the possibility of organizing the stock holdings of liberal and radical friends so as to use their financial involvement in companies to change company hiring and training policies.

It should just be mentioned that there are at present serious conversations between parts of the labor movement, the peace movement, and the civil rights movement, about a functional alliance around the question of jobs and employment. Still in the formative stage, if anything serious comes of this SNCC will probably be involved.

4) Miscellaneous service to national SNCC. From time to time projects emerge in which New York can or should be highly involved. For example:

a) summer vacations. Last year several score SNCC workers were given summer vacations of varying lengths in the New York area. If this is desired for this coming year, we must know to begin organizing on it.

b) the Mississippi theater project. A lot of the fund-raising and contact work for a free theater in Mississippi will have

to be done in the New York community.

c) recruitment of new staff. The potential for staff in the New York Community in New York has never been explored, even though a number of staff persons come from there. More work needs to be done in that area.

In connection with the expansion of the office, we plan also to regularize the structure of SNCC in New York. There has been a vague non-defined Friends of SNCC group in general in the City, and also many local groups, e.g. at the high schools. Our intention is to give the Friends group form as that body of people who have pledged themselves to a specific amount of money each month to SNCC. The group would meet regularly for educational and action programs, and some kind of activity would be shifted entirely to that group, e.g. the food and clothing drives. Their expenses would come out of their pledges. I think it is possible to see a group form of several hundred people who would raise several thousand dollars each month, in addition to handling various and kind of projects. In addition there would be separate high school friends of SNCC, organized in similar fashion.

Without going into details on how this would function, what we are trying to achieve is a situation where New York citizens carry much of the responsibility -or the financial support and activity on behalf of SNCC, their understanding this not to be some kind of service but a necessary action if we are ever going to deal with the problems of the country which affect them as well as southern Negroes.

This is an informal outline only. It suggests the direction of our thought and asks for an expansion of staff. More is involved than simply expansion, of course, including an implicit decision to shift some of the political responsibility within SNCC toward the North. Whether this would include formal participation in the decision apparatus of SNCC, is up to the Coordinating Committee, but we think it ought to be considered.

Jim Mosenis