

THE SELMA LITERACY PROJECT

a report for the year 1963-64

co-sponsored by:

THE NORTHERN STUDENT MOVEMENT  
THE STUDENT NON-VIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION

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IN THE FALL OF 1963, THE STUDENT NON-VIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE AND THE NORTHERN STUDENT MOVEMENT AND THE NATIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION, co-sponsored a research project to construct literacy programs for adults usable in a Southern civil rights protest area.

With the coming of the civil rights movement to a Negro community and with the desire to vote seems to come an increased interest and motivation in learning reading and writing. This interest in learning seems especially evident in those protest areas where freedom schools exist. The interest and excitement of the teenagers over new-learned things seems contagious and soon adults are coming by the field offices asking for literacy instruction or adult education programming "like the freedom schools for the kids." The field staff of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee has felt the need for some time for adult education programming that would teach reading and writing and communicate the possibilities for a better life through social change establishing a society where all men are in control of the important decisions in their lives. However, the time needed to think about and develop these programs is not possessed by a field staff and thus a research project was initiated.

Selma, Alabama was chosen as a typical field situation. A voter registration movement had been operating there for approximately a year and the staff had been receiving requests for literacy programming from individuals in the community.

The project started with a search for literacy materials. There were, however, certain requirements of these materials.

#### REQUIREMENTS OF MATERIALS

The requirements for literacy materials stems from the values of the movement for human rights that we are now involved in. Some of these values are:

1. That the only society worth working for is the society where man participates fully in the decisions that affect him.
2. That man has an unlimited ability to change and grow.
3. That there is value in those qualities contained in the style of life of the black belt Negro adult which have helped him to survive and endure in his circumstances and which have given him whatever wisdom he now possesses.
4. That any attempts to assist a people in changing their circumstances must take the people where they are and involve them in creating the direction and quality of social change needed

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If we are to take these values to their logical extension in the teaching of reading and writing, then it stands to reason that our approach should not dictate to the adult how he is to learn -- but should involve the adult in creating the direction and amount and kind of learning he is to experience.

The teaching approach and materials should increase his sense of identity and confidence so that he knows his capabilities and his strengths and will be further motivated to carry through the implications of the civil rights struggle in which he is now involved. The teaching approach and reading materials should assist the adult in increasing his skills in creating and participating in a fully democratic society.

This means for the teaching of reading to the adult, that there can be no imposed systematic method as such. The learning adult is not a child. He speaks in complicated sentences with many-syllabled words. He has had a life-time of experience and learning with the resultant wisdom of age. If these things are of value to us, then no literacy materials which treat the adult as a child and/or which reflect the world as only white and only middle class are acceptable.

#### EXISTING LITERACY MATERIALS

Research into literacy materials was not extensive because the Office of Education, Adult Education Division (HEW) had just completed a year's evaluation of almost all existing adult literacy programs in the United States. Their conclusions were that "one of the most critical problems in adult basic education is the dearth of suitable instructional materials...They do not do the job fast enough....Existing materials are not interesting enough....and do not relate to the needs of adults. They use a style as well as content more suitable for children. Usually the method used is repetitive....the content matter which most of the material deals with is the pedestrian and uninviting." (Report of the Task Force on Adult Basic Education, Instruction Materials and Related Media, January, 1964)

We reviewed some existing materials to find out ourselves the approach they took in teaching literacy. (Some of these were the Laubach Method, Operation Alphabet, the Brown Family Series, etc.,) The customary approach was to start with the alphabet or short one-syllable words and in sequence work up to longer, more complicated vocabulary. These efforts were based on reading approaches for children with the usual aim being to teach a word-



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sight vocabulary and word attack skills, thus building a vocabulary based on traditional word lists as developed by Dolch, Dale, Thorndike-Lorge, etc. The supposition was that once this basic reading word list was accomplished, the adult would have learned most of the words necessary to enable him to comprehend most reading material available to the public. All of this would be very logical if the non-reading adult spoke in one-syllable words and had no reading knowledge of words at all.

### THE NON-READING ADULT

The functionally illiterate adult defies almost all the assumptions on which existing literacy materials operate.

Existing materials attempt to build a learner's reading skills sequentially -- in other words -- in an order based on grade school children's reading levels. Basic words are learned first. From there, reading skills are built which relate to the graduated difficulty of new words introduced to the learner. Independent reading is finally encouraged by teaching the use of the dictionary.

The most important characteristic about the non-reading adult, however, is that he cannot be classified on a grade level. There are few adults without any knowledge of words at all. Most have gotten the "alphabets" and some reading training either at home or once and awhile when they could get to school. Many have taught themselves to spell through a sentence so they can puzzle out the meaning. None of this can be categorized as a "grade-level". The adult's reading vocabulary is not made up of first, second or third grade words and neither can the limited reading skills he possesses be classified as first, second or third grade level. He has a varied reading vocabulary with varied reading skills. He may know the word 'addition' but be unable to read the word 'one'. He may be able to half-spell, half-sound some word but not others. He may or may not be able to take words apart and may be able to guess some words (context clues) but not others.

All of this defies categorization or a sequential system of learning. The sequential means of teaching reading could not take into account the reading abilities and strengths the adult already possesses and probably would start so low as to lose the adult's interest from the beginning. In addition to this there is a childish quality of any materials based on a sequential teaching approach.

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### THE NEED

From our research and from our sense of values we discerned that there was a need for a reading approach and supplementary teaching materials which would:

1. Assist the adult to develop whatever skills of reading and writing he now has and equip and encourage him to go on to independent learning by including him from the beginning in creating the direction, amount and kind of learning he is to experience.
2. Utilize both the adult's interests and informational needs as subject matter for the teaching of reading. (There is a certain amount of skill necessary in this society to confront the existing social agencies and get from them what is coming to you. The poor and poorly educated have often no way of learning about what they can do, who they can contact or how they can contact officials or agencies to obtain relief or assistance for their needs.
3. Assist the adult to learn things about himself and his race that he was never taught and increase his sense of identity and confidence.
4. Reflect the needs of the adult's life and bring about an understanding of those forces in his society which have shaped those needs and present the possibility of changing those forces to help answer the needs.

Our research revealed no system of teaching nor set of materials which could meet these needs. We did learn about the "experience-story" approach to teaching reading through a week-long seminar held for us by the Bank Street College in New York City. In this approach, the teacher encourages discussion from the class. The teacher listens for awhile and then with the adults, chooses sentences from what they have discussed and writes them on the board. As a teacher grows more sensitive to the class -- he will be able to choose certain words from the discussion that will teach the kinds of word attack skills needed by those particular individuals. Words are discussed, taken apart, defined, used in other ways and gradually adults begin to learn how to "de-code" their spoken language into a reading and writing vocabulary. It is an approach adaptable to the varying reading skills and vocabulary of the adult and it builds on his present reading skills to expand to new words and new skills.

This approach seems a logical expression of our values about the teaching of adult non-readers. It takes the adult where he is,

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with his interests and needs. The words and reading skills taught evolve from the adult rather than being imposed from the teacher. The adult is involved in the direction and amount of learning and not dependent on any individual to direct his learning. From the beginning he is encouraged and equipped to become an independent learner.

As this approach was used during the year, its weaknesses and strengths were discovered. Its strengths were that the adult learned reading skills almost intuitively, without being confused with rules and their exceptions. For instance, teaching the concept of vowels can be confusing and meaningless. Many adults after two or three months experience with "de-coding" words will intuitively come to know that in spelling the word 'trust', after the letters 'tr' must come the letters - a - e - i - o - or - u. Phonics are difficult to teach with adults -- especially those whose dialect defies most of the rules. We found with the experience-story method that the adult learned intuitively and with experience how to sound through words, without having to get excessively involved in teaching rules. To say that a person learns intuitively, however, is not to say that rules are never taught. Rules are taught as the person asks for them and in this way retains their meaning.

The obvious weakness in this method is that in using the experience-story primarily, it is possible for the teacher to miss a word attack skill that is needed by an individual. These skills are not taught systematically and the teacher has to keep a finger on what has been learned and what needs to be learned.

With more experience, modifications can be built into the 'experience-story' approach and it should evolve to a most useful approach in teaching adults reading and writing.

### THE SUMMER PROJECT

The purpose of the summer project was to bring a staff into Selma to experiment with some known teaching approaches and write new literacy materials. We realized early that a summer was not long enough to deal with all of the research problems -- but a start had to be made.

Seven people were hired to work in Selma. Six had their degrees and three were involved in post-graduate studies. Three attended a teaching methods seminar held in February in Harlem for the purpose of equipping a staff to obtain some initial teaching experience and do research in the ghetto community near their university. These three had little real success in getting the



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expected teaching experience, although they did do some research.

Four of the seven actually came to Alabama when the summer began; the other three for various financial and health reasons were not able to join us. The four met for a second seminar at Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama just prior to their coming to Selma.

#### THE TRAINING SEMINAR

The training seminar attempted to deal with two problems. One was that the staff, by and large from the Negro middle class, had the expected class prejudices and myths about the adults that were to be taught. There was a need to get at their unconscious values and show where these contradicted with their spoken values.

The second problem was that the staff was to do work in an area where there are virtually no known professionals or technicians who can approach the problem of developing literacy programming within the stated values of this project. They would depend almost primarily on their competency, on the experience they would gain and on their values to guide them in creating the kind of approaches and materials needed.

The plan for the seminar was to reflect as nearly as possible the unstructured working situation the staff would be faced with in Selma. There would be no lectures or working papers. The only resource persons were the literacy staff coordinator who had been living in Selma for the previous seven months and Dr. Joseph Argrett, Director of Training for Mobilization for Youth (New York City). The seminar procedure was to confront the staff with a problem. For example, "Tonight there will be eight adult's meeting with you whom you know very little about except that they are interested in learning how to read better. How will you approach them to discern their reading skills and strengths and interests." The group then role-played the situation. The role-playing revealed to participants the extent of the research problems they were to face; it revealed to the seminar directors the extent of participant's actual values (as opposed to spoken values) in relationship to teaching adults. In role-playing, for example, they portrayed non-reading adults, as slightly retarded people with a vocabulary of one-syllable words. As teachers, their attitude was a masked kind of paternalism. The group grew to see the extent of their prejudices and how they could not cover them up but had to work them out.

The seminar was also an opportunity for the staff to work out some

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policy decisions for the summer. Among these was the decision that the staff would avoid identification, if possible, with the voter-registration SNCC staff. There were two reasons for this. One: harassments and jailings could greatly hinder us from completing our goals within the short amount of time that we had. Two: many adults in the community feared being subjected to these same kinds of harassments and therefore chose not to involve themselves with the movement. The literacy project was seen by both the movement and the staff as a means of reaching this large number of adults that the movement was not reaching. If then, we desired to reach these people and hoped to gradually introduce them to the movement, we thought we should project to the community as an uncontroversial education program. This decision was reinforced after we spent a day of the seminar listening to three community leaders analyze the movement and its relationship to the community.

The seminar engendered a great sense of community among the staff. The group was enthusiastic about the coming summer and Dr. Argrett, who has a natural gift for bringing people out of themselves, contributed greatly to building that sense of community. However, when the staff entered Selma, within two weeks the community spirit had broken down. There was insecurity and frustration about the goals of the project. Tension and ambivalence were felt about having to live with the decision to remain separated from the SNCC staff. It was difficult for the staff to be motivated in their day to day work.

The reasons for all of this are complex. Persons motivated by the civil rights movement find it difficult to be separated from the concrete expression of that movement....which in Selma were the activities of the SNCC staff.

But another, more elusive reason was found in the pattern of the staff's working habits. It seems that people who have gone through the system of education in this country have an almost total orientation towards directed learning. Their days in school are usually structured by something or someone outside them. Their patterns of using time are largely crisis-oriented. What this means is that their curricular and sometimes extra-curricular activities are put off until the last minute because they work better when there is an authority symbol -- in this case a deadline -- to make them work. There is little ability to work in a day by day, week by week, long-term fashion. They need a strong authority figure before they feel secure enough to work on their own. They are extremely threatened by the possibility or anticipation of making mistakes. If the authority



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figure is not present to reassure them that they won't make too many mistakes and that they are on the right track, they procrastinate until eventually some deadline appears. Then the work is often an elaborate side-stepping of the question or problem involved. It seemed the easiest to articulate what our work was to be, week by week, but the most difficult task to implement this day by day.

This might have been overcome had there prevailed a strong community spirit among the staff. People could have helped each other through those daily periods of hesitation and frustration. The let-down after the seminar is not easily explained. It had something to do with Dr. Argrett leaving, thus the keystone of the spirit was removed and also personality factors and the various levels of maturity and personal motivation were abrasive factors which sustained the breakdown throughout the summer. But also, the seminar itself was at fault. It was not and could not be, as long as it was away from Selma, a "reflection of the unstructured working situation the staff would be faced with in Selma." Discussions and opinions formed about the work ahead were not realistic enough to prepare the staff to survive the demoralizing difficulties found in the days ahead.

One of the major lessons learned from our training experience is that if training of staff is to be directly related to the conditions of their work and the problems that are to confront them, then the training should be "on the job." Integrated into the role-playing sessions and discussions should be actual recruiting and teaching of adults. In this way the discussion is real involving real experience and not operating on a projected situation which is often unreal and permeated with myths and prejudices. For instance, we found that our policy decision to remain independent of the voter registration movement was not realistic. We had forgotten that a town like Selma is family centered and that young people living together instead of with families are wondered about and suspected. The SNCC staff and a few school teachers are the only young people living with themselves; therefore any young people coming into town, especially in the summer when all the teachers had left, are immediately identified as "freedom people." Within two weeks the word had spread throughout the black community that four staff people were new freedom workers. If the training session had been held in Selma, we would have realized within a few days that our policy decision to avoid identification with the SNCC staff was unreal and perhaps saved the staff some of the frustration of not being able to be involved with the expressions of the movement in Selma.

We feel that the 'value-digging' that was contained in the seminar should remain in any future training program. It was most helpful

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for the staff to understand themselves and their attitudes towards the people they were working with.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNITY

One of the basic objectives for literacy programming for the movement is to integrate local people as soon as possible into the planning and teaching, with the long-range goal of the community itself taking over the literacy programming. It was unrealistic, however, to expect that within this summer, in addition to recruiting, teaching and research that we could search out and train adults. We did feel the importance of including the community in some initial planning. By doing this, individuals would be discovered who could eventually be worked with after the summer's work was completed.

The staff coordinator went to the three leaders in the community who had expressed the most interest and had given assistance to the program. After some discussion, they formed themselves into a "Steering Committee for Adult Basic Education." They invited a broad cross-section of community leadership -- teachers, ministers, professionals and businessmen -- many of whom were unconnected with the movement. The basic rationale for this meeting was to include the community in the planning of the program and to get a broad base of support of people both in and out of the movement. We needed at least implicit approval from these community leaders. Without this, we could have easily been cut off from a wide-section of people whose leadership would discourage their participation in the program.

The format of the meeting was to acquaint the leadership with the program, introduce them to the staff and ask them for suggestions and criticisms. About one-fourth or thirty of the one hundred people invited attended the meeting. They were very interested in the program and overwhelmed us with questions. From them came offers of assistance in contacting non-reading adults that they knew. From the meeting it became evident that our first tack in recruiting the non-reading adult would be by following up these leaders and contacting the people they knew.

### RECRUITING THE NON-READING ADULT

Probably the most difficult problem in adult literacy programming is how to reach the non-reading adult and discern his reading and writing needs. In the months preceding the summer staff's arrival,

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the staff coordinator had tried the approach of announcements at the weekly mass meetings. After a month and a half, only one person responded. The approach was varied by contacting people personally, getting them to come to an information class or meeting around an interest area, in this case, social security or voter registration. Adults were invited who had questions or problems about voter registration or social security. The hope was that people's reading and writing needs could be discerned through the course of the classes and from there they could be channeled into a core class of non-readers. The problem with this approach seemed to be that the people who came were almost all readers. The next approach tried was to ask these adults to ask friends of their's whom they knew could not read, if they would like to join the program. This method showed the most promise. It is still, however a slow and torturous method of recruiting. Adults are busy people and often have the same hesitation and reticence that we had about approaching a person and talking to them about their illiteracy and suggesting they involve themselves in a reading program. Many weeks were spent calling contacts, setting up meetings, only to have no one or just one person show up.

As far as discerning a person's reading skills, it was found that the best approach was simply to ask instead of beating around the bush and trying not to 'embarrass' the adult. The direct approach saves time and relieves the adult of having to pretend about or mask his reading needs. By beating around the bush we communicated to the adult that we were embarrassed about him not reading and betrayed again our middle class prejudices.

When the summer staff came to Selma, some additional approaches to recruiting were tried. One of these was to go to a church on Sunday and have the minister introduce them. They would then speak on the program and invite people who either knew of people or who themselves would like to be involved in the program. In addition to recruiting, it was one of our aims to get community leadership's support for the program. Therefore, some of the first churches gone to were the larger churches with the more powerful ministers. In evaluating this, however, we found that most of the people going to the larger churches were the middle-class and those congregations were least in need of the program. Those non-reading members of the congregation that did hear the announcement perhaps found the social pressure of identifying themselves too difficult. We feel that in the future, if churches would be approached for recruiting, emphasis should not be on just going one Sunday to a church to speak about the program. The staff might work with those churches serving primarily the under-classes. Perhaps part of the program could be run through one of these churches.



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The primary method of recruiting was to follow up the contacts that the leadership had given us at the introductory meeting. The staff was then to contact the non-reader and in the first session tutor the adult in an attempt to discern the level of literacy. Many of the leadership did not come through with names, however. Those that did, did not pursue their non-reading contact with any sense of urgency and thus the staff was left dangling for sometimes two or three weeks before they received names. These kinds of frustrations contributed all the more to the breakdown of staff morale. Their own initial hesitations and reticence about contacting were not easily overcome and this was entrenched when their beginning attempts were unsuccessful. They needed some successes to reinstate a sense of confidence and rekindle their motivation.

At the end of the first three weeks, we evaluated all of this and decided to try another approach. There was to be a whole week when the voter registration books would be open. The movement called this week "Freedom Week" and was encouraging large numbers of Negro adults to go down to the court house and register. One of the adult's in the staff coordinator's voter registration class brought to the staff's attention the fact that adults did not have enough time to practice the four page State of Alabama voting test at the mass meetings and many were worried about not being sufficiently prepared to go down and apply. The project staff decided that this week would be an opportunity for us to both assist the movement by providing for people the time and place to practice the test, but also to assist us in contacting non-readers. We divided the city into five areas and found churches central to those areas. Announcements were prepared which would be made in churches and meetings that a voter registration practice clinic would be open all week to assist people in practicing the test. People who had difficulty with reading and writing were to be especially urged to attend.

We never were to find out just how successful these clinics would have been. The entire staff, with the exception of the project director, was arrested two days before Freedom Week. The only possible course of action for that week was for the staff coordinator to run only one clinic, which of course was not convenient to the other areas of the city. Because of the jailings, the staff was unable to circulate and make the announcements and the clinic was only publicized at the mass meeting, in one or two churches and by word of mouth. Movement leadership estimates that one hundred to two hundred people went down to try and register and of course only thirty came through the practice clinic. Of those thirty only three or four were non-readers. We do feel, however, that these clinics would have gotten at least fifty-percent more people had we been able to follow through our original plans.

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(The arrests occurred when the staff members, having been misinformed that a local dairy bar was serving Negroes since the signing of the Civil Rights Act, entered the dairy bar for milk shakes. The staff was still operating on the policy decision not to become involved in direct action and they were fully prepared to leave if asked. As it turned out they were not even asked to leave but immediately hustled off to jail. The date was July 4th.)

The total time given over to arrests, jail and court appearances was two to three weeks. When we were once again able to plan our work for the remainder of the summer, there were only four to five weeks left. We felt it would not be responsible to try and build classes -- as the staff had only been recruited for the summer and would have to leave shortly. We went back over the little recruiting experience we had and the teaching experience some of us had, and felt that one of the needs in adult literacy programming was for intermediate reading material, done in large print with attractive photographs.

This need was apparent for a number of reasons. First of all, as far as the experience-story approach to teaching can take an adult, some supplementary materials are still needed. We had reviewed and tested some available paperbacks but found them too advanced and initially discouraging to the adult needing some beginning successes in learning.

In addition to needing booklets that will supplement the adult's classroom experience and bridge to more difficult reading materials, there is also a need among the poor and poorly educated for a range of learning experiences. One, for instance, is to know how to confront social agencies for relief. This might mean learning how to write a letter which would go over the head of the discriminatory local social security administration and which would get assistance and action from the office in Baltimore. Or it might mean helping the adult to put together a personal vita, getting previous jobs, dates, places, names and addresses correct which he could refer to when applying for jobs, unemployment compensation, welfare, etc.

Another informational need is to learn about the kinds of exploitation going on in the community. Why are unions kept out? What happens to employees when unions are kept out? Who keeps them out? What would happen if unions came in? Why do sharecroppers have to buy feed and fertilizer from the same store? Why is it that a sharecropper can never seem to make ends meet? Is it personal inabilities or is it because of the system set up for him to buy and sell? Why is it that the Negro high school's curriculum

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is geared mainly towards vocational training, how to be a better domestic, yard man, auto mechanic? Why don't the students get language courses, advanced math and science? Why is it the main professional occupations that students might be encouraged towards is teaching or the ministry? What does the Negro not having the vote have to do with these educational conditions?

And the correlative informational need to these are: what are unions about and what do they mean in an economy? What is a cooperative and how does it prevent exploitation? What happens when a Negro community gets the vote and works together to bring about the changes needed. What government problems are available to our community and how can we go about getting them in our community.

In addition to these informational needs basic to survival, there are other areas of knowledge which many adults are now asking for. These range from Negro history to government and the democratic process.

It also seems desirable and possible to capture events and persons in the history of this struggle for a people for freedom and dignity. Such figures as Mrs. Fanny Lou Hamer, of the Second District in Mississippi, Emmitt Till, Medgar Evers, Aaron Henry, have lives and beliefs that are inspiring to people who share in the struggle. It would seem possible, for instance, to have a literacy class in Indianola, Mississippi to express in their own words from their own experiences just what a person like Mrs. Hamer means to them. These expressions could be a basis for a booklet done on the life of Mrs. Hamer which could then be used throughout the blackbelt, not only to teach reading and writing, but also to share with people history-making persons and events.

#### WRITING MATERIALS

The important thing we learned from the people we worked with is that their learning must start within their frame of reference and they then can work with new information and concepts from that point. Therefore, instead of writing a booklet on unions on the basis of a few weeks research on available information, we would go into the community and ask a number of people such questions as: What do you think of unions? What has been the experience of unions around here? Where did you learn about unions? Do you think people need unions? In doing this we were looking for how the adult viewed unions and also what had been the community's experiences with them. Then we did research on what was available and what was possible in the community for people to do about their problems. We would start to write perhaps using a verbatim



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story told to us about employees with no union and then go on to build the material around the experiences of other communities when unions were present and working.

Two booklets are in the process of being completed and three more have been sketched. Of the two to be completed, one will concern voter registration, the test, the importance of the vote, the past history of Negro's in politics in Dallas County, a case history about a Negro community (Tuskegee) and what it accomplished by being able to vote. The other booklet concerns the Bible. The desire to read the Bible is widespread in the Negro community but there are some problems involved when it comes to using the Bible to teach reading. Many versions retain archaic words and most versions are printed in very small type. Also, many families are unable to own a Bible. The booklet being prepared is being done in large primer type with as many as possible of the archaic words replaced. Interlaced with Bible passages and stories will be some thoughts on the relationship of the scriptures to the civil rights struggle done by a local minister who is a civil rights leader in the community.

These booklets will be as inexpensively produced as possible. They will be mimeographed (size 8½ X 11) and we plan to use a number of both descriptive and symbolic photographs.

We see these booklets, however, only as guidelines for other areas which may desire to include this kind of material into their literacy programming. Although they probably can be used outside of Dallas County, it seems preferable that other areas draw from their own particular history and current situation of the community. The construction of such material is not an extremely difficult or technical operation, although it does require some training and experience.

#### SUMMARY

The summer's work, plagued by problems and difficulties as it was, did not yield all that we had expected. We wanted to gain a lot more teaching experience than was possible and we hoped to have more material written for our use this year. The summer did, however, reflect very accurately the kinds of problems that a literacy program would face in a typical protest area in the South. Two people, through the summer's experience are able to formulate guidelines, write materials and train staff for literacy programming in any southern protest area. This experience is the most important yield of the project. We now know the acuteness of the recruiting problem and have more realistic ideas on how

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to approach a community and build literacy classes. We have a better sense of how to train teachers and will be able to anticipate their problems and hopefully prevent them from disintegrating into helpless inactivity. We have a very exciting concept of literacy materials and their uses -- and from the little testing we have done this year on what was written -- we are very optimistic about the usefulness of these materials.

#### IN PERSPECTIVE

The past year's work, supported by the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO, the United Auto Workers, the National Council of Churches and the Aaron E. Norman Fund, has made it possible this year for the southern civil rights movement to have two full-time literacy workers experienced and trained in setting up literacy programming for a southern black-belt field situation. The team will be available to travel to communities, to recruit and train full time literacy workers, and in cooperation with the existing movement in the community, train not only field workers but indigent adults to teach and write literacy materials and set up on-going literacy programming relevant to the needs of that community. The services of the team are not to be construed in any way as competitive with existing citizenship-literacy programming done by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference or as competitive with any educational programming done by local community leaders. If asked, the team would be prepared to offer to existing community programs whatever is useful from the experiences of the past year.

A year's community programming that the literacy staff would aim to set up would have the following goals:

1. Recruit full time literacy workers to coordinate programming and insure that it will continue in the community auspices.
2. Hold a training course for the length of time necessary to bring full-time workers and field staff to the point where they can carry on the work independently. This means they are thoroughly familiar with the goals and values of the program and have the teaching and writing tools to build programming that will be effective and relevant to the community's needs.
3. The literacy team will then move on to a new community while the trained staff left behind will continue recruiting and teaching. It is estimated that it will take two or three months of recruiting and teaching before a staff is able to think about writing materials. During this time, the staff should get a sense of the informational needs of the adult community. They will gather

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printed materials found in the community to use as a basis for writing booklets. In addition to this they will encourage their literacy classes to discuss and write about events or persons connected with the civil rights movement that they think would be particularly inspiring reading material for other adults in other communities. Using the adult's own expressions and ideas in addition to helpful correlated research, the literacy staff can begin to layout booklets and test them.

4. Simultaneously, with their recruiting and teaching, the literacy staff should be searching for indigent adults and groups which could be trained to continue literacy programming after the staff has left. The staff should also train those adults now involved in the reading program to search out non-readers and on a tutorial basis start to teach them. Those adults could then be channeled into classes.

5. Finally, the staff should phase itself out of the leadership position in programming and give the responsibility for planning and running the programming to those indigent people trained during the year. The staff should use much of this time to write and revise reading materials and teach one or two people in the community to write materials.



## SELMA LITERACY PROJECT

### STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES FROM SEPTEMBER 1, 1963 TO SEPTEMBER, 1964

#### INCOME

National Council of Churches	\$ 500.00
Miss Dorothy Dohen, N.Y.C.	100.00
Miss Carolyn Pezzullo, N.Y.C.	50.00
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Cusack	50.00
Mr. Michael Coleman	50.00
United Auto Workers	1000.00
Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO	1500.00
Aaron E. Norman Fund	3500.00
Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee	<u>1100.00</u>
TOTAL INCOME	\$7850.00

#### EXPENSES

Staff Coordinator's subsistence (SNCC)	\$1100.00
Staff Coordinator's travel	2448.76
Administrative Expenses	
a. Telephone	438.61
b. Postage	51.57
c. Supplies and Equipment	99.57
Educational Materials	186.17
Staff Insurance	63.00
Professional Assistance	216.00
Staff Travel	512.09
Staff Subsistence (3 months/ 4 people)	1072.90
New York Seminar	300.04
Talladega, Alabama Seminar	399.06
N. S. A. Administrative Fee	<u>200.00</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$7087.77</u>

EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENSES	762.23
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PROJECTED BUDGET TO CONTINUE LITERACY PROGRAMMING  
THROUGHOUT THE BLACK BELT

September, 1964 to September, 1965

FOR LITERACY TEAM ( Mr. Silas Norman, Miss Mary Varela )

TRAVEL	\$3000.00
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	500.00
SUBSISTENCE FOR TWO	<u>2000.00</u>
TOTAL	\$5500.00

FOR CONTINUATION OF WORK IN SELMA ( Two Staff Members )

SUBSISTENCE FOR TWO	\$2000.00
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	200.00
TRAVEL	200.00
EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS	200.00
AUTOMOBILE	<u>500.00</u>
	\$3100.00

FOR EXPANSION OF WORK INTO MISSISSIPPI AND THE BLACK BELT

"X" numbers of literacy workers hired at \$1,000.00 per year  
with administrative, travel and educational materials expenses  
at \$400.00 per year per community.