

## Proposal to Field Foundation for Tougaloo Work-Study Project:

### I. The Problem

Over two hundred young people have interrupted their education at various levels--high schools, college, graduate school--to devote their energies full time to SNCC in securing civil rights for Negroes in the South. In so doing, they have put into practice one of those values which the nation's most farsighted educators and educational leaders have sought to place before the young people of the nation: commitment to helping one's fellow man. Thus, in a sense, it is those students who are not involved in this movement who are educationally deprived.

Yet, while recognizing that they are gaining, we must also understand that these young people in the field are sacrificing important elements of education which are available in a formal academic setting: intensive reading, exchanges of information and opinions with others of the same intellectual interests, consultation with teachers and others having special knowledge or insights to share with young people. To have these available without the stimulation of social involvement, as is true in most academic situations, is to have it only, without utilizing its stimulation for intellectual growth, and to leave unrealized a great potential, for the individual and for society. Places like Antioch College have sought in their own way to combine the two, through alternating periods of field work and study. We propose, for field workers in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, a program that is specifically designed for civil rights activities, with the same broad goals of combining education and social concern that exists at Antioch and other similar programs.

### II. The Plan

1. The work-study program was devised to provide a partial 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 need for manpower. The Work-Study Program seeks to resolve this conflict by integrating the two activities of field work on voter registration and some academic training in the form of discussions led by college faculty 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 of the following year's tuition.

The program at present is in its initial stages and should be viewed as an experiment. As an experiment it should allow those of us who are interested in its progress to develop the best possible program. In this spirit the program must be evaluated and all attempts must be made to improve it where necessary.

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 five months ago. They show initiative and many can be relied upon to begin and carry through projects without being supervised by an older, more experienced worker. 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 in Mississippi with additional staff to carry out its activities. In short, there is no doubt but that the "experiment" has been successful thus far, and should be continued in future years. It can, however, be strengthened.

2. Problems with the existing project fall into the two obvious general categories of: those which have to do with the "work" part of the program, and those which have to do with its "study" aspects.

#### A. Work Program

Voter registration work in Mississippi is exceedingly demanding. Intense drives require vast amounts of energy which drains workers both mentally and physically. The immediacy of the needs of such drives tends to make all other activity seem unimportant, especially studying. For this reason, it is felt that often too many demands have been made on the participants.

The participants feel that work in other areas of Mississippi, in addition to Jackson, is necessary if they are to know the problems of a statewide activity and how to deal with them. Since the program at present does not provide for academic training on such trips, and the Tougaloo faculty has not been available for intense periods of study on their return, such travel has had to be extremely limited.

#### B. Study Program

The Tougaloo faculty is hard worked and generally hasn't time to prepare stimulating discussions. The field grant now allows \$5,000 for some books and pay for instruction for the Tougaloo faculty exclusively. Any other instruction must be without recompense.

The difficulty in ascertaining definitive commitments from the Tougaloo faculty has made it impossible to plan the academic schedule of the program more than one week in advance. This made the academic program suffer when requests for workers were made from the COFO office. The participants would be found to be already committed to time-consuming tasks by the time a Tougaloo faculty member had become available for scheduled classes.

### 3. Suggestions for the Program's Improvement.

Expansion---the program should be expanded to accommodate thirty participants who would attend Tougaloo the following year.

Schedule---study institutes should be alternated with month-long work periods.

Work program---the thirty participants would be organized into six smaller groups of five members each. During work periods each group would be assigned to a different area of the state to become involved in the SNCC program there.

Study institutes---all thirty participants would come together for periods where there would be nothing but intensive study in the form of discussions, reading, and research assignments. These periods would be planned by an educational staff of three, who, in addition to leading discussions

themselves, would schedule visiting consultants to participate in the institute.

### III. Curriculum

1. 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. Achtermann, of the Tougaloo history department, and Mendy Samstein, who has an M.A. in history from Cornell University led discussion of the history of the Freedom of 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 discussion of the opinions of Justices Brandeis and Holmes in some of the more relevant cases. In this discussion, John Stuart Mills' 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 why Freedom of Speech was desirable or crucial in a democracy. They were encouraged to explore the questions in terms of the relationship of liberty to order. The spontaneous discussions led to the group's awareness of so very broad and philosophical questions relevant to their lives.

2. For next year's program we hope that subject matter would be designed to give the field worker a broad intellectual background, as well as factual knowledge and deeper perspectives for civil rights activity. For instance, the reading of great works of literature should be encouraged, even though it is not immediately relevant to the work at hand; yet, novels by James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison and Richard Wright, obviously pertinent to the present context, should be read. The history of the Negro in the United States is a vital and necessary subject, but major currents in the 20th century world history (totalitarianism, anti-colonialism) should also be studied. Certainly the discussion of national politics and government should be related to political problems in Mississippi. Economics should be taught not as abstract theory, but in terms of those things which affect the realities of life in the South: corporate structure, the plight of the farmer, the labor movement, the role of government in the economy. A reading of Plato's Crito and Apology could be an entrance to a discussion of civil liberties in the United States.

The books we would like to use are not textbooks, but works of quality which are interestingly written and intellectually challenging. They will be mostly paperbacks. Just to cite a few examples: C.Vann Woodward's The Strange Career of Jim Crow, John Hope Franklin's Reconstruction, E. Franklin Frazier's Black Bourgeoisie, Howard Fast's Freedom Road and W.E.B. DuBois' The Souls of Black Folk might be good for Negro history. Essays and articles might be reprinted and used to good advantage, since they are more manageable as an assignment for a single discussion.

Literacy and the three R's, which are badly needed both for some field workers and people in the community, constitute a large-scale problem which deserves separate plans. Here we are concerned with those at high school and college levels. Yet, our general philosophy about field education is that the basic problems of man and society can be understood and analyzed by all people of normal intelligence, regardless of form

educational background, and IF our approach is imaginative and intelligent.

#### IV. Finances

The following is a listing of the aspects of the program that will need financing:

Salaries of three members of the educational staff, @\$2,600 . . .	\$7,800.
Travel for participants to and from institutes . . . . .	950.
Travel and boarding costs for visiting consultants . . . . .	2,520.
Books and other study material . . . . .	400.
Scholarships for participants , @ \$1,000 . . . . .	<u>30,000.</u>
Total . . . . .	\$41,680