

Memo. . . FROM THE DESK OF

W. A. BRANTON

DATE 7/29/64

Jack:

I thought you would be interested in seeing a copy of the Second Annual Report of the Voter Education Project which I am pleased to send you herewith.

WAB

COMPLIMENTS OF DARBY PRINTING COMPANY

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

of the

VOTER EDUCATION PROJECT

of the

SOUTHERN REGIONAL COUNCIL, INC.

For the Fiscal Year April 1, 1963 through March 31, 1964

* * * * *

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NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR QUOTATION WITHOUT PERMISSION
Except for Table III.

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BACKGROUND STATEMENT

The Voter Education Project is a non-partisan program under the supervision of the Southern Regional Council, Inc., and is engaged in a research study of the causes of low voter registration in 11 southern states, the methods and techniques being used to increase registration, and the development of educational programs to provide voters with the will and knowledge to register and vote. Contributions to the project are deductible from federal income taxes, pursuant to a ruling by the Internal Revenue Service dated March 22, 1962, and the first public announcement of the project was made on March 29, 1962 and carried the endorsement of the Chairmen of both the Republican and Democratic national committees, in addition to other leading Americans. The First Annual Report of the Voter Education Project covers the VEP fiscal year, April 1, 1962 through March 31, 1963, and describes: (1) Formation and purpose of VEP; (2) Operation, including methods and objectives; (3) A description of selected projects; (4) Formula and criteria for grants; and other pertinent information.

This Second Annual Report covers the period April 1, 1963 through March 31, 1964. Due to the fact that the method of operation and other activities follow the same general pattern as was followed during the first fiscal year, we will not undertake to repeat this information in this Second Annual Report. VEP will publish a detailed account of the entire project fol-

Jordan ~~serve~~s in the capacity of Acting Assistant Director of VEP in addition to his duties as Assistant to the Director of the Southern Regional Council, Inc. John D. Due, Jr., a young Florida lawyer, joined the staff as an intern in human relations under the Eleanor Roosevelt Foundation Intern Program.

STATE BY STATE REPORT

ALABAMA

This state requires an applicant to pass a literacy test before one can be registered and the test is often applied in a discriminatory manner against Negroes. After Negro groups started conducting classes to familiarize applicants with the test, the state adopted a new law which requires a new set of test questions each month. The law also requires that a registered voter must vouch for each applicant and a poll tax is required for voting in all but federal elections. Registration by Negroes is not too difficult in the TVA area such as Huntsville, Tuscumbia, Decatur and Florence, and neither is it too difficult in Mobile. As a result of federal court injunctions, Negroes may now register with little difficulty in Macon and Montgomery Counties, though it appears that some discrimination still exists in the latter. Macon County now has more registered Negro voters than whites and Negro candidates are seeking public offices there for the first time in more than fifty years and will probably be elected.

VEP has maintained a continuous program in Jefferson County (Birmingham) where Negro registration has risen from 10,000 in April, 1962 to more than 23,000 as of April, 1964. Rejections are still high at the registrar's office, many of them resulting from racial discrimination. In counties such as Dallas (Selma) and many other Black Belt Counties, it takes real courage for a Negro to seek to register. Here, they have

suffered harassment, intimidation, and physical violence from private citizens and law enforcement officials. And in Wilcox and Lowdes Counties, where there are more Negroes than whites, every Negro applicant has been rejected and there is not a single registered Negro voter.

The registration books are open only two days each month in most Alabama counties and this makes it difficult to get many people registered even where discrimination is not very strong. During July, the books are open for a week in the rural counties and VEP has supported a special project during this period through a statewide organization known as the Alabama State Coordinating Association for Registration and Voting (ASCARV).

VEP will support a massive rural county program in July, 1964 and will probably continue programs in the TVA area, Gadsden, Birmingham, Montgomery, Mobile, Macon County and Dallas County. New programs will be planned for Tuscaloosa, Anniston, and other areas during the summer and fall.

ARKANSAS

Arkansas has no registration law or procedure for voting other than the requirement for the payment of an annual one dollar poll tax. We know of no racial discrimination in the acceptance of poll tax payments nor in the right of persons to vote in elections in this state. The poll tax may be paid at any time between February and October 1 and qualifies the tax payer to vote in all elections coming between October 1 of the year in which the

tax is paid and September 30 of the following year. This is a good "registration" deadline for the November general elections but seems much too early for primary elections. Arkansas is a one party state where nomination in the Democratic Primary is tantamount to election. The Democratic Primary Election is held in July and is usually the most important election held in the state but in order to vote in the July primary, one must have paid his poll tax prior to October 1 of the preceding year.

Because of the fact that all effort must be duplicated each year, VEP has only conducted a few projects in Arkansas, such as Pine Bluff and Little Rock; however, a massive statewide program is planned for the late summer of 1964 in every county with a substantial Negro population.

FLORIDA

With the exception of a few North Florida Counties, registration by Negroes is fairly simple and the registration results under VEP have really been outstanding in this state. Florida releases periodic reports showing the total registration in each county by race and by political party and a satisfactory check can be made on our programs. One of the most successful VEP programs to date was conducted in Dade County (Miami) where 9,403 new registrants were added during the fiscal year. Much of the success of this program was due to the personal leadership of Weldon Rougeau, a CORE field secretary, who had charge of the program and who was able to get excellent cooperation from other

organizations in the area. CORE conducted a program in Gadsden County (Quincy) and the 875 new Negro registrants obtained there were twice as many as the total Negro voters the county had. Tallahassee presented a fine example of team work by CORE, NAACP, and local groups, white and colored, working to increase voter registration.

NAACP was given assignments in Alachua, Polk, Jackson, Marion, Orange, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Volusia, and Duval Counties, all of which resulted in substantial new voters. All of the above assignments will probably be renewed during the summer and fall of 1964 with other counties being added.

GEORGIA

With the exception of Southwestern Georgia, registration by Negroes in this state does not prove very difficult and VEP results have been among the highest of any state, with more than 60,000 new voters added during the past two years. In Savannah, the Chatham County Crusade for Voters worked with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to add more than 5,000 new voters to the rolls of that county. The Savannah project was the location of a voter registration film soon to be released under the title, "Right Now," and of which VEP is one of several sponsors. SCLC sponsored a VEP program in Albany through the Albany Movement and conducted projects throughout the state in cooperation with the Statewide Registration Committee.

The Atlanta program continues under the auspices of the All Citizens Registration Committee, a local group made up from representatives of several different organizations. This city will have neighborhood registration soon and will see Negro deputy registrars for the first time. Registration will take place at various schools from five to nine P.M. and should result in an increase of Negro registration in Fulton County to approximately 70,000.

NAACP has conducted successful projects in Augusta, Brunswick, Rome, and others and in DeKalb and Peach Counties. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee continues work in the "hard core" areas of Lee, Terrell and Sumter Counties where results cannot be measured simply in terms of new registrants but are reflected by the overcoming of fear and by other intangibles.

It is anticipated that when the Georgia Legislature meets in special session soon that the present May 2 registration deadline will be extended to July for the primary and later still for the November general elections. This will make possible the addition of thousands of new voters this summer.

LOUISIANA

Next to Mississippi, VEP results have been lower than any other state. Reports indicate that this results from the serious racial discrimination on the part of many parish registrars. VEP has supported a continuous program in Orleans Parish under the

direction of the Coordinating Council of Greater New Orleans. Only 425 new voters were added to the rolls in New Orleans during the year but many hundreds more sought to register and were rejected on various grounds. Considerable work was done by the local group to keep thousands of Negroes who were already registered from being purged.

Most of the work outside New Orleans has been under CORE for the past year, with heavy emphasis in the Sixth Congressional District of Louisiana. The Justice Department has filed several suits regarding discrimination by parish registrars and they were successful in one extremely important case which involved state officials and 21 parish registrars. Under the terms of an injunction issued early in 1964 in UNITED STATES v. LOUISIANA, the 21 named registrars are enjoined from certain discriminatory practices which, if obeyed, should greatly aid the cause of Negro voter registration. All 21 of the named parishes were assigned to CORE but it is too early to tell what results can be achieved there. The entire Louisiana program will very likely be continued through September of 1964.

MISSISSIPPI

This state presents more resistance to would-be Negro voters than any other state and offers more intimidation and violence to Negroes than all the others combined. VEP has only been able to add 3,871 voters to the rolls in Mississippi during the past two years, a figure lower than the results from a single small

city like Brunswick or Decatur, Georgia, or Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The total Negro registration in the state is approximately 28,000, representing only 6.6% of the Negroes 21 years of age or older. But here, as in Southwestern Georgia and Dallas and Wilcox Counties in Alabama, the success of the VEP program cannot be measured solely in terms of new registrants.

Mississippi has a long history of intimidation and violence against Negroes who seek to register and with the rather large number of cases of injury and death to their persons and destruction of their property, it is little wonder that Negroes developed a fear of attempting to do anything which the white people of that state were opposed to. The First Annual Report of VEP carried seven pages on the Greenwood Project which was described there as being "in many ways considered to be one of the most successful of the VEP supported programs." Despite the massive jailing of citizens, shooting of registration workers, burning of property and other acts of violence and intimidation of Negroes in Leflore County, more than 2,000 Negroes have gone to the courthouse in Greenwood to attempt to register. Many were never permitted inside and the majority of those who made it inside were rejected by the registrar. This same story has been repeated in Hattisburg and other cities. VEP has expended more than \$50,000 in Mississippi and feels that valuable research materials have been gathered from the project and that we have truly helped "to develop educational programs which will be most effective in providing voters with the knowledge and will to register," one of the major objectives of the Voter Education Project.

The work in Mississippi was under the sponsorship of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), a Mississippi organization made up of the local representatives of NAACP, SNCC, CORE, SCLC and local organizations. VEP suspended all operations in Mississippi in the fall of 1963 with the exception of an NAACP project in Jackson. Several factors were taken into consideration in reaching this decision. A sizeable portion of the VEP budget had already been spent in Mississippi and the registration results were quite minimal. Sufficient research data had been gathered to more than serve the purposes of the project. No meaningful registration could be expected in the state until the Justice Department is able to win an effective decree in the long pending broad-purpose suit filed in UNITED STATES v. MISSISSIPPI. The delay in the hearing of this very important suit leaves much to be desired, but if it can ever be decided favorably in accordance with the position of the government, and is then vigorously enforced, it may be possible for registration to move in that state. Until this happens, it does not appear to be wise for VEP to put any more of its already limited funds into Mississippi. We only hope that the situation improves before VEP goes out of existence, but it will not change appreciably without massive federal action.

NORTH CAROLINA

This state has few restrictions which might prevent Negroes from registering and it is considered one of the better states

for the VEP program. Many counties permit registration only during a three-week period preceding an election and this means, "no election-no registration." NAACP conducted programs during the year in Guilford, Johnson, Brunswick, and Harnett Counties, and in Durham in cooperation with the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs. The Winston-Salem Urban League conducted a voter education and research program in Forsyth County which was soon followed by an active voter registration program under the joint sponsorship of NAACP and CORE. The American Friends Service Committee sponsored a summer VEP program in Greensboro which netted 803 new voters. Perhaps the biggest increase in the state came about in Charlotte where the VEP program was run by a local group, the Non-Partisan Voter Registration Committee. A local project in Wilson brought 861 new voters, and VEP supported SNCC workers aided local residents in getting 1,208 new voters in Raleigh.

VEP plans to support several local projects in the state during the summer and early fall which should result in several thousand additional voters in time for the November elections.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Here we have the most highly organized statewide VEP program of any of the states. The entire state has been organized under a congressional district program with a project now going on in each county in every one of the six congressional districts. Representatives in each county select their local officers and they in turn elect congressional district officers. VEP has now

made a direct grant to four districts and will shortly approve the other two. Although the congressional district idea did not get started until the fall of 1963, it has already helped to push South Carolina VEP results beyond that of North Carolina (32,140 to 28,551) and shows promise of giving South Carolina the highest percentage increase in Negro registration. Because of the obvious success of this program, VEP will continue support through the October 5 deadline for registration in that state. Prior to the development of the Fourth Congressional District program, NAACP conducted a highly successful program in the city of Greenville.

TENNESSEE

It now appears that there are no restrictions to Negro voter registration in Tennessee except for some continuing discrimination in rural counties like Haywood and Fayette Counties, but which reach nowhere near the proportion of several years back when federal intervention was necessary. The NAACP is by far the major sponsor of VEP programs in this state, for, with the exception of a summer YWCA-NSCAF student program in Nashville, NAACP has had the entire state to itself. The results have been good in Memphis, Chattanooga, Knoxville, Nashville, and Jackson. Memphis shows the highest gain of any city with more than 12,000 added during the fiscal year. A large share of the credit for NAACP results over most of the South must be extended to W. C. Patton, NAACP Field Secretary for Voter Registration, for it has

offered us the first real opportunity to work with registration programs involving other than Negroes, for here we could work with white and Latin-Americans as well. Four groups make up the leadership of VOTE, each group having equal representation. They are: (1) Latin-Americans, (2) labor, (3) white liberals, and (4) Negroes.

VEP had received some unsolicited contributions from various individuals active in VOTE and we decided to put a part of this money back into the state through a VEP registration program under the direction of VOTE. As a result of the early success of the program, we made rather large supplemental grants from our regular VEP budget. The program operated out of a headquarters in Austin and extended throughout the state. Local money was raised to supplement the VEP funds and labor organizations also contributed money in helping with the massive poll tax campaign.

Texas voters went to the polls on November 9, 1963 to vote on a proposal to eliminate the poll tax, but this proposal was rejected. In four major cities, Houston, Dallas, San Antonio and Fort Worth, there was a total increase of about 332,000 new voters over 1960 figures as compared with an increase on 180,000 in 1963. It is estimated that the VEP programs were responsible for over 208,000 new poll tax payers by the January 31 deadline, more than 50,000 of whom were white or Latin-American persons. After the ratification of the Twenty-Fourth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which banned the requirement

of a poll tax payment as a prerequisite to voting in federal elections, a new Texas law permitted the issuance of free poll tax receipts during February and early March of 1964. Holders of the free poll tax receipt would only be eligible to vote in federal elections. Some 60,000 free poll tax certificates were issued under the VEP programs, 90% of which were issued to Negroes.

NAACP did some work in the Texas poll tax campaign without benefit of VEP funds, but subsequently received VEP support to assist in the "free" poll tax drive. The Texas Council of Voters, a Negro organization, was very active in the VOTE programs. Fort Worth and Houston have developed highly organized precinct and block organizations in the Negro areas. Houston has the highest number of Negro voters of any city in the South at the present time, approximately 90,000, but this figure is likely to fall during "election off years" because of the annual poll tax. The Memphis, Tennessee, Negro registration of approximately 80,000 is a much more permanent figure and is probably the highest in the South.

It is now physically impossible for anyone to register or pay a poll tax in Texas, and this situation will continue through the remainder of the grants-in-aid program of VEP. This is the only state where such a condition exists. The only possible VEP activity which could be supported during the remainder of the program would possibly be in the area of voter education.

VIRGINIA

Registration results in Virginia could be described as "poor" in terms of the 16,520 new voters added in two years, but when one considers the poll tax and other requirements, it may not be as dim as it first appears. As a general rule, new voters have to pay two years poll taxes plus penalties before they can vote, making it a costly proposition.

Negro voter registration witnessed a steady increase between 1940 and 1950 when most of the registration activity was under the sponsorship of the Virginia Voters League, under the leadership of the late Dr. Luther P. Jackson. The League has not been very effective in recent years but could be a major influence in registration and political education if the former interest could be revived over the state. VEP made a grant of \$1,000 to the Virginia Voters League in November, 1963 to help support its organizational structure building.

A small grant was made during the year to the All Citizens Registration Committee of Northern Virginia in support of registration and poll tax programs in that area of the state. The Peninsula Coordinating Committee in Newport News is a well organized and efficiently run organization and received VEP support. The Norfolk VEP program added approximately 1,000 new voters through the Tidewater Voter Project. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference was given grants for registration programs in Danville and Petersburg, and the former could be described as highly successful. Richmond, which has a very active local organi-

zation, the Crusade for Voters, added 250 new voters during a two-week student YWCA project. NAACP registration in the state has been carried on primarily without benefit of VEP funds but local chapters have been active throughout the state.

As a result of a new Virginia statute, it will be possible for new applicants to register all the way up until October 3 to be eligible to vote in the 1964 general elections. VEP has been concerned over the apparent lack of initiative on the part of some agencies which could do much for voter registration in Virginia. VEP will shortly make direct grants to local projects in Nansemond County and Portsmouth and will continue support in Newport News and Norfolk. Plans are being made to support a local program in Richmond and possibly in other cities. The entire Fourth Congressional District offers a vast potential for increased registration and field studies are now being made by the VEP staff to ascertain the best approach for VEP support.

PLANS FOR THIRD (FINAL) YEAR OF VEP

When the voter project idea was first discussed, the plan was to operate it for approximately two years. When it became apparent that the idea would become a reality and would get started in the Spring of 1962, it was also obvious that a two-year program would end well up into a presidential election year. In order to take full advantage of all of the motivation for registration which an election year brings, the planners of VEP decided to run the grants-in-aid program for approximately 2½ years. VEP will therefore support voter registration programs in each of the southern states up until the deadline for registration for voting in the November General Elections. This will mean until the first week of October in most of the states, with the exception of Texas where the deadline passed last January 31.

In addition to active registration programs, VEP will support some voter education projects which will be designed to help in a number of ways to serve the total purposes of this project. Among those are: (1) support of literacy programs to aid applicants in passing registration tests; (2) programs to explain the use of voting machines or the marking of ballots; (3) classes in government to acquaint voters with an understanding of public officials and their duties and responsibilities; and (4) some pilot "get out the vote" programs in a non-partisan manner.

ANTICIPATED INCOME 1964-65

In order to conduct the final year of the project, VEP has been assured of the following terminal grants from foundations:

Edgar Stern Family Fund-----	\$ 75,000
Taconic Foundation-----	80,000
Field Foundation-----	<u>75,000</u>
Total-----	\$230,000

FINAL VEP REPORT

At the conclusion of the active registration programs in October, VEP will immediately set in motion selected projects to study the effect of increased Negro voter registration in the November General Elections. As soon as the general elections are over, the staff will then begin to sift through the large quantity of data and material which has come into the project office during the life of the project. Dr. Leslie W. Dunbar, Executive Director of Southern Regional Council, Inc., will devote a major share of his time at that stage toward the writing of the FINAL VEP REPORT. The final report promises to be a most interesting document which should be of great value for years to come to persons interested in voter registration, political action, human relations and other areas.

FUTURE PLANS

Many of the participants in the VEP program bemoan the announced end for VEP. They praise the great gains made under the program, but point out the fact that less than 50% of the Negroes

of voting age will be registered in the South by November, 1964. There is no question about the need for continued registration programs, but we feel that we must pause and review our past activities very carefully before suggesting that the program continue. For this reason, there will be no recommendation regarding the future of VEP until after we have studied and analyzed our previous program and written the final report. At that time, we will be prepared to make some recommendation of the future of VEP, but it is not contemplated that the final report will be ready before 1965.

TABLE I

VEP RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS FOR
FISCAL YEAR ENDING 3/31/64

Balance 3/31/63	\$ 28,496.44
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RECEIPTS:

Foundations:

Field	\$ 75,000.00
Taconic	125,000.00
Stern Family Fund	107,000.00*
Other	22,050.00

Organizations and Churches	5,200.72
V.O.T.E.	5,730.00
Individuals	7,806.00
NAIRO	<u>2,500.00**</u>

Total Income	<u>350,286.72</u>
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GRAND TOTAL	\$378,783.16
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DISBURSEMENTS:

Grants-in-Aid	\$246,331.15
SRC Overhead Payments	9,587.57
Operating Expense	<u>69,087.35</u>

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	<u>325,006.07</u>
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BANK BALANCE 4/1/64	\$ 53,777.09
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* \$25,000 of this amount represents advance payment by this foundation toward fiscal year 1964-1965.

** This figure represents NAIRO's share of internship program.

TABLE II.
GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF GRANTS-IN-AID
Fiscal Year Ending 3/31/64

STATE	INDEPENDENTS	CORE	NAACP	URBAN LEAGUE	SNCC	SCLC	TOTAL
ALA.	24,275.85				3,500.00		27,775.85
ARK.	270.00				1,200.00		1,470.00
FLA.		3,000.00	11,875.00				14,875.00
GA.	13,132.35		11,060.00		3,000.00	9,500.00	36,692.35
LA.	7,700.00	13,000.00	2,900.00				23,600.00
MISS.	18,500.00		4,145.00				22,645.00
N. C.	9,452.74		2,100.00	4,828.98	2,000.00		18,381.72
S. C.	14,937.00	14,000.00	2,100.00		555.00		31,492.00
TENN.	3,519.23		8,450.00				11,969.23
TEX.	43,500.00		3,000.00				46,500.00
VA.	5,780.00		650.00			2,500.00	8,930.00
EFA*	2,000.00						2,000.00
TOTAL	\$142,967.17	\$30,000.00	\$46,280.00	\$4,828.98	\$10,255.00	\$12,000.00	\$246,331.15

*Educational Film Associates Note: A large portion of the grants to Independents represents direct grants to local affiliates of agencies listed above.

TABLE III.
RESULTS OF VEP PROGRAMS
 APRIL 1, 1962 to MARCH 31, 1964

(Publication or Quotation of this Table Permitted)

STATE	VEP RESULTS 1ST FISCAL YR	VEP RESULTS 2ND FISCAL YR	VEP 2 YEAR TOTAL	EST. TOTAL NEGRO REGISTRATION 4/1/64	EST. NO.* UNREG. N. 4/1/64	% OF ELIGIBLE NEGROES REG.
ALA.	5,598	9,777	15,375	104,000	377,320	21.6
ARK.	4,952	3,804	8,756	80,000	112,626	41.5
FLA.	22,790	30,651	53,441	240,616	229,645	51.1
GA.	27,156	31,963	59,119	240,000	372,910**	39.1
LA.	2,765	3,545	6,310	162,866	351,723	31.6
MISS.	1,592	2,181	3,773	28,500	393,756	6.7
N. C.	9,838	18,713	28,551	248,000	302,929	45.0
S. C.	7,357	24,783	32,140	127,000	244,104	34.2
TENN.	16,269	22,500	38,769	211,000	102,873	67.2
TEX.	20,590	267,984	288,574	375,000	274,512	57.7
VA.	6,100	10,420	16,520	121,000	315,720	27.7
TOTAL	125,007	426,321	551,328	1,937,982	3,078,118	38.6

VOTER EDUCATION PROJECT
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*BASED ON 1960 CENSUS FIGURES
 **VOTING AGE 18 IN GEORGIA