

SNCC

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee  
107 Rhode Island Avenue, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20001

September 7, 1964

REPORT ON THE SUMMER -- WASHINGTON OFFICE

This will be a general report on the progress of the Washington office since the total change of staff in June. The general consensus is that there has been definite progress made, though what we want to do is much greater than what has been done.

BACKGROUND: The SNCC office in Washington dates back to the fall of 1963, when Bill Mahoney began a research operation here. Previous to that there had been the NAG group at Howard University (a SNCC affiliate) but no actual office with staff. As the year progressed more work was done in the area of fund-raising and education and related projects, and other staff began to work here: Mike Thelwell headed the office in the winter and Spring, Bill Mahoney returned to school, Miriam Cohen took over the research aspect of the office. A major food and clothing drive was carried out around Christmas time. Rent strikes were organized early in the new year, though the program ran into legal difficulties and was finally abandoned. A major Dick Gregory concert took place in April, and various other fund-raising projects made the office self-supporting through the winter and provided support to Atlanta in the Spring.

Inter-personal problems, plans to go back to school and the Mississippi Summer Project caused a change of staff in mid-June, with Lenore Gensburg (later Lenore Monsonis) and myself coming to Washington. A new secretary was hired, leaving a three-person staff in addition to the research staff, which functioned largely as a separate operation.

During the weeks previous to the change, there had been a number of important activities in connection with the Summer Project. A public hearing on brutality in Mississippi and the need for Federal protection was held in early June. A good deal of important groundwork was done by Mike Thelwell in connection with the Congress, including a briefing on the Project for Congressmen and a good deal of information sent to them.

SUMMER 1964: The two major foci of the summer have been fund-raising for the Summer Project and reorganization of the office and constituency in Washington. A good deal of attention was also given to Congress, to the issue of Federal protection in Mississippi, the Atlantic City convention, and to building for an expanded program in the Fall.

In chronological order, summer events were:

- June 13: small folk-singing concert
- June 21: back-yard fund-raising party at the home of Mr and Mrs Robert Hausman
- June 22-23: concentrated lobby effort with Oxford trainees
- June 30: mass meeting for Federal protection for Mississippi workers; spontaneous march of 400 to White House

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- July 11: Fund-raising party at the home of Dr. & Mrs. Fred Solomon
- July 18: Fund-raising party at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Mark Harris
- August 5: Fund-raising party at the home of Robert Nathan; Harry Belafonte guest
- August 6-9: Memorial service for the three murdered staff people; three day 24-hour vigil at Justice Department; in connection with CORE.
- August 16: Party at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Richard Barnett
- August 24: Picket at the White House in support of the Freedom Democratic Party
- August 31: First Friends of SNCC meeting after the summer.

Concurrently with these specific events were other happenings worth noting:

- a) a fund-raising ad was run in the Washington Post on July 12, which has brought in money steadily during the summer; totals are in the financial report at the end of the report.
- b) some people in the Washington community have started a series of chain parties. Each person invites ten other persons for coffee and a SNCC speaker, each expecting to contribute \$5; then, from that party, two or three persons arrange other similar parties, etc.. So far half-a-dozen have been held, and others are scheduled. Response has been \$50,80 per party. The amount of money is not outstanding but the contact with the community is invaluable.
- c) Whenever an incident occurred in Mississippi involving the summer volunteers, we notified their Congressman and tried to get something started in the way of pressure upon the Justice Department and the FBI. Many times little interest was shown, an occasion a good deal of support. Unfortunately many of the Congressmen who were most interested in the Summer Project came from locations where few students came from, with the exception of some New York congressmen and the California group.

This range of activity is deceptive. At times this summer the staff did not know just what it ought to be doing next; this because of the unfamiliarity with the Washington community and the look of real rents here. There obviously has been extensive relation with the student community at Howard (though I understand at times this was rather strained); since the major activists at Howard were in Mississippi, there was a large vacuum not filled by the community. Some steps have been taken to correct this, but whether they will work out we do not know. At least there is significantly more contact with adults in the poor community (through the chain parties, other speaking events) than there has been. We deliberately held off on holding Friends of SNCC meetings during the summer: the Friends of SNCC group which held a few meetings in the Spring was predominantly white group, and we wanted to be somewhat more balanced before formalizing a Friends group.

There is no high school "SNCC" program in Washington. We hope to start one this Fall, but so far have not found the nucleus of stu-

dents who will pull in the others. Such a group cannot easily be organized from outside.

A word should be said about the research work done here in Washington. Except on rare occasion, this aspect of the work is not a lobbying action but rather the gathering of material, information, reports, etc., which the southern offices can use. It has functioned as an entirely separate operation, with its own staff, volunteers, etc.,. In mid-summer Miriam Cohen left unexpectedly to work in Mississippi, and Joel Dressler has taken charge, but the change of staff means there are many problems which must be worked out, primarily between the Atlanta research staff and the Washington operation.

Priorities and plans for the Fall include the following, not necessarily in this order:

a) formation of a regular Friends of SNCC group, which will initiate projects, make suggestions for program and fund-raising, meet regularly, etc., primarily community-oriented rather than student-oriented.

b) continue and spread the idea of fund-raising parties and other parties. We feel the latter is a good way to meet people who are helpful in a wide range of ways.

c) development now of a food-and-clothing program, so that when winter comes we are prepared to meet the needs. This means adequate storage facilities, etc.: and a group to work on it. High school kids can be very helpful here.

d) assistance in whatever way is necessary to NAG. The group will probably have trouble getting organized this year, since most of the leadership is going to stay in Mississippi to work, and we will give them what help can be given--an office, occasional staff help, supplies, etc.--while leaving the direction of the group to the group itself.

e) SNCC is virtually unknown in Washington. It is known somewhat, now after the summer, as a national group, but few know there is an office here. We will try to get as many different speaking engagements as possible, and try to get into the local news so that people know we are here.

f) There is also a civil rights vacuum in Washington. Without interfering with fund-raising activities more than necessary, those people in support of SNCC who want to participate in action on Washington problems should be given an opportunity to do so. What type of action project will depend on the group, but may focus on the welfare or housing issues. The attendant publicity would be helpful in food and clothing, fund-raising efforts.

g) benefit concerts are not common in Washington, and we will try to have a few this year to see the response. Max Roach and Abbey Lincoln are due in late October, so far.

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The major problems are lack of a regular volunteer staff to supplement the full-time staff, persons who will suggest and initiate things for SNCC in Washington, and a good place to work out of. The latter problem may be solved by a new office with twice as much space (107 Rhode Island Avenue, N. W.), which we may be moving into, but a new neighborhood means that we shall have to find new people, neighborhood contacts, etc..

There is vast potential in Washington, both for financial support and for action.

We shall be working on it.

Jim Monsonis

<u>CASH RECEIVED</u>	<u>MONTH</u>	<u>TOTAL DEPOSITED</u>	<u>BENEFITS</u>		<u>CONTRIBUTIONS</u>		<u>MISC.</u>	
			parties & concerts		indiv. & group		reg. & spec.*	
	JUNE	2,795.02						
	JULY	7,011.43	3,277.20	35.00	1,655.28	683.86	661.59	698.50
			Solomon					
			Harris					
			Belafonte					
			Poser					
			Friedman					
	AUGUST	10,555.05	8,872.81	5.00	928.00	198.64	1.00	549.60
			Belafonte					
			Harris					
			Jencks					
			Chain					

CASH RECEIVED TO DATE:

Soloman - 1,208.50  
Harris - 1,719.24  
Belafonte - 8,203.00  
Jencks - 1,565.07  
Chain - 220.50

Individual Contributions include \$1,248.16 from ad

\*Exchanges

## EXPENDITURES

	JUNE		JULY		AUGUST	
	WASHINGTON	ATLANTA	WASHINGTON	ATLANTA	WASHINGTON	ATLANTA
POSTAGE	25.00		82.50		54.59	
OFFICE	135.00		266.13		154.65	
FUND-RAISING	-----		910.13		397.68	
DIRECT-ATLANTA		-----		3,700.00		7,000.00
STATIONERY	72.00		-----		-----	
RENT AND BILLS	-----		324.81		580.83	
RESEARCH		-----		11.17		-----
TRANS		30.00*		-----		252.06**
MAINT		-----		-----		63.77***
CAR	-----		-----		139.69	
MISC		300.00****	20.70	-----	5.25	100.00*****
EXCHANGES	23.25		250.55		505.19	
LOANS	-----		150.00#		50.00##	
PETTY CASH						
POSTAGE	60.00		314.97		110.00	
MAINT		4.00###		174.64####		53.00#####
TRANS		-----		118.75+		528.18++
CARFARE	5.25		7.50		14.20	
CAR MAINT	35.50		4.50	-----	39.48	35.00+++
OFFICE SUPPLIES	1.00		77.70		39.80	
RESEARCH		-----		32.47		3.25
LOAN	-----		10.00++++		-----	
MISC	-----		47.33	-----	5.00	50.00+++++

\* Annie Moody

\*\* Dale Smith, Joe Gross, Bill Stafford, Carole Merritt, Muriel Tillinghast, Len Holt, Barbara Jones

\*\*\* Joel Dressler

\*\*\*\* Peter Orris for project in Mississippi

\*\*\*\*\* Frank Smith for convention expenses

# Jim Monsonis (repaid); Mike Thewell

## Charles Sterrod

### Mike Thewell

#### Lenore Monsonis, Jim Monsonis, Bill Stafford, Joe Gross, Gilbert Moses

\*\*\*\*\* Joel Dressler, Mike Thewell, Jim Womack

+ Mrs. Hamer, Cordell Reagon, Karen Treusch

++ Louise Sonlyo, Courtland Cox, Car Rental for Mississippi, Haywood Burns

+++ Buick to Atlanta

++++ Convention Expenses

++++ Janet Rose

NOTE: Exchanges=cashing paychecks, June was recorded after the 22nd