

Following the staff retreat there will be a study institute beginning the afternoon of November 11 and ending the afternoon of November 21. The institute, which will also be held at the Gulfside Methodist Assembly in Naveland, Mississippi, is open to all staff and to students enrolled in the Tougaloo College and Miles College Work-Study Programs. Tougaloo Work-Study people are required to attend and all staff are strongly urged to spend from 5 to 11 days at the institute.

The purpose of such an institute is to stimulate study of political, economic and social issues - a clear understanding of which is necessary in order to develop and carry out effective programs of change for our society. Developing and carrying out effective programs of voter registration or convention and Congressional challenges, or knowing what program to carry out require clarification and definition of the political issues involved - that is - an understanding of which political or economic forces create and maintain the unjust conditions that need to be changed; how these forces do it and why.

It is the job of an educational program to stimulate people to see these issues, not as defined by the news media and the political campaigns, but as they really are - effecting, determining, influencing the lives of everyday people.

The issues which could be discussed at the Institute are many. However, a few questions have been selected to which we might direct our attention. An outline of these questions and their tentative schedule is attached. Essentially, the question is the participation or lack of it that Black Belt Negroes have in making decisions, and what can be done about it. A good starting point might be an examination of the situation as it exists on the local level - with which staff and work-study people are familiar and can draw upon their own experience.

Then the local situation could be viewed in light of the larger issues which are shaped by national structures and institutions which operate on more than the local level. In other words, the county sheriff, the farmers leagues, the Negro sharecropper and their roles in the local community cannot fully be understood unless there is an understanding of the activities of the Federal Government, big business, labor, etc., which interact with these local people to influence and reinforce them.

And also there must be thought about creating programs which will change the situation and enable people to participate fully in decision-making.

At the Institute there will be stimulation and guidance for reading and discussion ( in groups of about 15) of the issues raised. Discussions will be led by staff people and outside resource people. Guyot, Forman, Samstein, Morris, Jesse Harris, Moses, Frank Smith, Jack Mennis, Dave Dennis, Gerry Wilson, Casey Hayden, Dick Jewett are some of the staff who have agreed to help in the discussion groups. Ella Baker, Howard Zinn, Staughton Lynd, Myles Horton, Bob Coles, Charles Hamilton ( Professor of Political Science at Lincoln University) and Robert Zangrando ( Professor of History at Rutgers ) are some of the resource people that will be at the institute.

The materials to be used will be magazine articles, pamphlets, specially prepared material, tapes, films - and if they arrive in time from the publishers - paperback books by Richard Wright, DuBois, Baldwin and others.

The Gulfside Methodist Assembly where the staff retreat and institute are going to be held has a variety of recreational facilities - a tennis court, volley ball court, football field, the Gulf of Mexico for swimming, a snack bar.

The Free Southern Theater will perform for us on the 18th and 19th of November.

The institute is not intended to be a comprehensive study of vital issues. The time is too short, the turnover of discussion leaders is high, and planning and carrying out such programs require the full-time energies of more people. The institute this time will be primarily exploratory - exploring a wide range of issues and exploring ways to examine these issues. Hopefully these sessions will stimulate thinking about important questions and stimulate thought about this kind of educational program. What should be its content? Study of issues in the social sciences and humanites? Training in basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, typing, community organization, etc.? For how long should the institute be held? When should it be scheduled to best work with programs in the field? How should the educational programs best relate to other programs? What emphasis should be placed on this kind of program?

Let's discuss these questions and others at the staff meeting and at the Institute.