

SNCC WEST COAST REGIONAL CONFERENCE  
November 13-15, 1964  
Saturday Workshop

Political Pressure on Behalf of the Southern Movement (Community)

The meeting began with a statement by Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally, criticizing civil rights groups for their lack of political sophistication and urging them to work more closely with the two major political parties. He stressed the need for young Negro politicians. He is very impressed with the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and feels the need for civil rights groups to actively support candidates and elected legislators who are friendly to the civil rights movement. He pointed out that a Congressman from L.A. who had helped pass the Civil Rights bill was almost defeated by a Bircher and could have used active support in his campaign.

The discussion then centered on a number of topics:

Independent Political Action--There was disagreement over what "independent" means. A number of speakers stressed the need to work in the major parties. However, "independent" action as a segment or faction within a major party was encouraged. Mr. Dymally pointed out that almost every group in the Negro community is non-partisan and that partisan activity is needed.

Specific Proposals for Action--

- 1) Challenge the Mississippi representatives in Congress through a California block of legislators.
- 2) A call for protection of the civil rights of Mississippians by military action.
- 3) A call for the withdrawal of federal funds from Mississippi.

Effectiveness of Direct Action--Mr. Dymally said that the demonstrations at the State Capitol in favor of the Rumford Act had been effective. Now that Prop. 14 has been passed, however, direct action may be less effective, as Prop. 14 may be interpreted as a mandate not to support civil rights.

Pressure on Legislators--Mr. Dymally stressed the importance of letters and petitions to influence legislators to support such things as support and protection for Mississippians.

SNCC Action on Political Issues--A number of persons felt that SNCC should publicize the anti-civil rights activities of HUAC. SNCC also should publicize Section 2 of the 14th Amendment and, on the basis of this Section, urge friendly Congressmen to challenge the legitimacy of Mississippi legislators.