

10/21/64 Barbara Brandt

All those little newspaper articles.....

At present the SNCC Research Department has two sources of newspaper articles. One, we ourselves do extensive clipping of local southern papers, particularly those from Mississippi, as well as of the New York Times. (We are interested in articles dealing for example with civil rights activities and local power structures.) We also utilize a professional clipping service, which sends us articles from almost every newspaper and magazine published in the United States containing keywords such as "SNCC", "COFO", and "FDP". (In addition to articles about our activities, these include releases about local bombings, etc., which have been given to the press by SNCC Communications.) All articles, from both sources are, filed by topic for easy reference later. (For example, under Mississippi we have files on Voter Registration Drives, Local Politics, Violence, Summer Project, Legislation, and so on.) The use of these articles ranges from supplying information for developing field programs, and for writing propaganda releases, to leading us to new sources of northern support.

If SNCC were simply a protest group concerned with opening up a few local lunch counters, we would not need to maintain a file of newspaper articles and utilize a national clipping service. But we are, in some way or other, an organization aimed at bringing about changes in the political structure of this country. SNCC's intimate involvement with the FDP, and our continued efforts to obtain Federal intervention and protection are just two examples of the importance of national politics and power to our organization. This necessitates our remaining informed about political developments on a nationwide scale, about political figures and organizations whose aid we can seek (as well as those against whom we must defend ourselves), about governmental programs which might be of help to us. Newspaper articles are obviously a valuable source of this sort of information. Our involvement with national politics and the Federal Government also leads us to seek local groups who can put pressure upon Washington at particularly crucial times. (From the 100s of articles sent us by the clipping service about the FDP at the convention, I found the names of several hundred local people, organizations, and politicians from all over the country who will be used to help support the upcoming challenge of the Mississippi congressman. I don't know how we could

have found these names if not for the clipping service.) The articles from the clipping service are also an indication of how well known SNCC is, and how we are viewed by the public.

The local papers which we ourselves clip also supply us with information for developing field programs and for writing propaganda releases, of which the "Genocide in Mississippi" and "Subversion of the Right to Vote" pamphlets are examples. These publications are useful in publicizing the truth about the field and stimulating political pressure, as well as bringing in contributions. (You will probably be interested to know that the Jackson, Mississippi papers specifically credit the distribution of the "Genocide" pamphlet with the defeat of the sterilization bill in the Mississippi Legislature). One of the activities the Research Dept. is planning, by the way, is a newsletter to be sent to project directors which will contain useful pieces of news and research. In sum, then, the purpose of the newspaper files is to provide both information and support for our field activities.