

[1964]

(M)

Proposed Plan of Action for CORE

Mississippi and Louisiana Staff

I

Background

We feel that the Mississippi challenge to the National Democratic Party marks the beginning of a significant new move by civil rights groups to confront the "power structure" with some meaningful and constructive efforts for change, both morally and legally. It took the civil rights organizations years to develop a program that would bring about meaningful changes in public accommodations laws. Aggressive, imaginative groups developed the sit-in movement that challenged the laws and conscience of this country.

There are several things besides the energetic efforts of the workers in the state that we feel contributed to the success of the convention challenge. First, it was a grass-roots movement made up of people from the grass roots. We were able to by-pass the "established" leadership, which helped us also to by-pass the traditional cries of "go slow" and "let's not hurt our friends." The people who made up the party were people who owed no allegiance to the local power structure. The party was also made up of people who had been active in developing the program, people who had attempted to register and had met with violence or economic pressure because they made that attempt. These were people who knew what suffering for a cause meant and were willing to continue suffering, which made them almost invulnerable to any type of threat or compromise offer from seemingly "big" people or the established leadership. They went to the convention independently.

Secondly, the movement was independent of any compromising obligation to any nationally established leaders, organizations, or the the Administration. It was and is one of the few creative movements that the conservative elements in the civil rights struggle, or Walter Reuther (meaning the labor power structure) or the Administration had no control over. Therefore, when the chips were down and some of the national leadership, Walter Reuther, and the Administration, turned against us in Atlantic City, we were able to maintain our militancy and determination without "stepping on anyone's toes".

The challenge proved to us that it is not safe for the civil rights movement to become too strongly aligned with the administration or unions or other conservative elements. We are especially critical of the unions. At this point, Walter Reuther depends heavily upon the Johnson administration because Johnson has a lot to say in regard to whether or not Reuther's present negotiations with the auto industry are successful, and Reuther needs a success for the survival of his union. At this convention, Reuther had to dance to the tune of the President. Because of certain ties that some of the civil rights leaders have with Reuther, they were forced to dance to his tune, which meant that they were also dancing to the tune of President Johnson. We're not saying that we should dissociate ourselves from the power structure altogether, but we are saying that we should not align ourselves with them to the extent that we cannot afford to go against their wishes or demands. Many of the delegates who were giving us aid

were forced to withdraw their support because of threats made to them by party heads or other people who had party ties. We must establish allies within their ranks, but we are certain that we can do this without obligating ourselves to the group.

We're convinced that any real, meaningful attempt to get civil rights representation in the political arena must be independent of these other ties, because we (the movement) must maintain a position that will free these powers to move in the direction of making some type of significant political change. The only way we do that is to remain a threat to these powers, and we can do that by being independent of them.

We feel that at this time CORE and SNCC are the only two organizations that can develop such a meaningful movement. In many aspects CORE has the greater potential of the two, because of our chapters and program in both the North and the South. The reason why we mentioned the North is that this is where political organization within our ranks is needed most. We did not have one delegate from within our ranks at that convention. If we don't do something about that soon, we are going to find ourselves in the same political dilemma in 1968. This means that the civil rights movement must infiltrate the political structure between now and '68.

II

The following are some general recommendations that we're making to CORE for a long-range program to begin immediately and extend through 1968. First, however, we would like to clear something up. At this point we do not interpret the Freedom Democratic Party as a third party, but as an attempt to build a meaningful political machinery to aid us (the civil rights movement) in obtaining a significant voice in our present government, both locally and nationally.

Program

work on budget

We feel that the Southern office should begin now to develop to the extent that it can service the coordinate the program in the South. The office should be equipped with the following:

- I. Research Department, to do the following:
 - A. Find out the political structure of each state in the region,
 - B. Do research on the economic standards of each state,
 - C. Do extensive research on federal programs and begin negotiating with the federal government to pressure them into getting programs into the Negro community.
 - D. Make all this material available to the Southern staff,
 - E. Plan curriculum for staff and local people so that they may get an understanding of this material.

- II. Program Department. Should have a director to do the following:
 - A. Create new and meaningful projects,
 - B. Plan for staff workshops and community workshops in which programs are explained,
 - C. Be responsible to the Southern office director for implementation of programs.

III. Communications Department.

- A. Should begin to service the whole region's public relations needs,
- B. Should establish a bi-weekly newsletter,
- C. Should coordinate all press conference and press releases held in the region. *regional*

IV. Director of the Southern Office.

- A. Should be in charge of all activities and departments of the office,
- B. Should have the final say on decisions made,
- C. Should serve as liason between the Southern Office and the National Office.

The following ~~is a recommendation for~~ ^{are} programs to be initiated in the South by the Southern office, and in the North.

I. Political Programs. We feel that in order to be prepared for 1968, we must begin now to establish a South-wide political machinery for the civil rights movement. The political program should cover the following states: Louisiana, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Texas, Mississippi, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Tennessee *Okla, 2*

- A. We should begin such an operation in Louisiana as a kick-off.
 - 1. Place staff in every Congressional district in the state (double the present staff.) *political + educational programs -*
 - 2. Begin to organize in key cities such as New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Monroe, Shreveport, Alexandria, Lake Charles, etc., ~~from the precincts up~~ *and on in the rural areas.*
 - 3. Begin massive voter registration drives (with standing lines, etc., to make them a matter of widespread public focus) in as many cities as possible.
 - 4. Begin to prepare local people to run in as many local elections as is possible, regardless of the number registered.
 - 5. Begin to initiate lawsuits challenging local elections on the grounds of discrimination against Negroes.
 - 6. Have suits filed challenging Congressional elections in federal court on the same grounds. *for best people*
 - 7. Establish political workshops throughout the state, beginning on a precinct level. There should be regular *(county)* workshops to plan political strategy. *for the people*
 - 8. There should be a bi-monthly Congressional district meeting and workshop to establish unity and build local leadership. *by the people*
 - 9. There should be at least two statewide meetings of the people by the end of May, 1965.

With this kind of organization, less staff will ultimately be needed, depending upon local organization.

B. Expansion into other states.

- 1. Alabama. We should immediately begin to prepare to send a field secretary and two task force workers into Alabama to begin to:
 - a. establish contacts in key cities *and rural areas -*
 - b. attempt to sell programs to already-existing groups,

? CORE
SNCC
COFO

depending on
community response +

- c. establish an organization and a voter registration program in a suitable community (which we can determine at a later date), perhaps like a local FDP.

Note: Alabama is very important to the overall program, and we feel we should make an initial move in that direction soon.

2. In the states where we have chapters, we should begin to orient them to a political program and have them carry it out as part of their overall program. Louisiana could set the example, along with Mississippi.
3. In the other states where we don't have chapters, we would have to send staff in to begin to feel out and establish the program. We can begin with a roving team of three task-force workers.

4. *Expansion of Staff in Fla, N.C. & S.C.*
 C. Staffing such a program.

1. Use volunteers from the fall recruiting to staff Louisiana and Mississippi.
2. Use veteran task-force workers for Alabama.
3. Begin massive recruitment for volunteers to work during the summer of 1965. These workers could be used to boost or begin the program in other states. They should work with veteran task-force workers. *Recruitment to immediately fill staff*
4. During the summer these people should work on building local leadership to carry on work after the summer.

Note: ~~We might be able to cover only one or two states during 1964-65.~~ Remember, this is a four-year program. But we have to get a foothold all over. We envision that in 1967 we can have a nine-state convention to discuss political strategy and prepare for the 1968 political conventions.

D. Preparation in the North.

1. Northern chapters should begin to work on getting reliable people politically active, and prepared to be delegates for the 1968 conventions of both parties.
2. Northern chapters should begin to have political workshops in their communities. *Chapters*
3. Northern field staff should develop a program of positive political action for their areas, and political education.
4. Have two task-force workers from Mississippi to begin working on Northern college campuses to recruit, do fund raising, orient students in programs, and set up college chapters.

III

Involvement of College Students

CORE ^{has} should put a task-force worker in Louisiana to work on the Louisiana college campuses. There are many untapped sources in Louisiana on the college campuses. These campuses have agriculture departments, law schools, social and political science departments, medical schools, etc.

The college program ~~should:~~

- A. ~~Begin to~~ Organize research groups to aid the research department of CORE.
- B. Set up college conferences to discuss political and social problems.
- C. Organize groups to help in community organization.
- D. Organize for statewide college conferences to discuss college involvement in the movement.
- E. Attempt to organize students from states within the region so that they can aid the program during the summer in their home states.
- F. Involve students in the educational program - community center and freedom school development.

We feel that it is time that we attempt to involve the Southern students in the movement again, since they are the future leaders of the South.

~~IV~~

~~Educational Program~~

(~~See separate memo - Freedom Education Proposal~~)