



MEDGAR W. EVERS

Slain NAACP Mississippi Field Secretary

OPERATION FREEDOM: Mississippi — 1964

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The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has active projects in every southern state except Alabama where, since 1956, it has been banned by a state court injunction. Mississippi remains the state of hardest-core resistance to basic democratic ideals and practices. It is a state in which fundamental political rights are openly denied and in which the economic conditions of the vast majority of the population are appalling. The home of white supremacy, Mississippi remains a real target of the NAACP.

The first NAACP unit in Mississippi was organized in 1917 long before the disfranchisement of the southern Negro was declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court. Despite trickery, intimidation and violence, NAACP workers have been able to expand their activity into each of Mississippi's five congressional districts.

Early in 1963, the Mississippi State Conference of the NAACP organized the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), a state-wide organization consisting of the Congress of Racial Equality, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and other civic groups. This coordinated organization, under NAACP leadership, launched a "Freedom Vote" campaign in which 93,000 disenfranchised Negroes cast "Freedom" ballots for Aaron E. Henry, NAACP state president and COFO chairman, for governor of the State of Mississippi.

Preparation for real democracy calls for additional programs in the state. Literacy projects and food and clothing drives for the needy have been instituted. But much more

comprehensive programs are now required to combat the devastating cultural and economic deprivation of the Negro communities in Mississippi.

This summer, 1964, the Mississippi State Conference of the NAACP, in cooperation with other constituent units of COFO, is launching a massive Peace Corps-type operation in Mississippi. Students, teachers, technicians, nurses, artists and legal advisers will be recruited to come to Mississippi to start a wide range of programs aimed specifically at voter registration and including Freedom Schools, community centers and other special educational and cultural projects.

Voter Registration

The struggle for freedom in Mississippi can only be won by a combination of political and other action within the state and a heightened awareness throughout the country of the need for massive Federal intervention to insure the voting rights of Negroes. This summer's program will work toward both objectives.

Voter registration workers will operate in every rural county and important urban area in the state. These workers will be involved in a summer-long drive to mobilize the Negro community of Mississippi and assist in developing local leadership and organization.

A total of \$40,000 must be raised for a Freedom registration campaign. The registration campaign which was launched in February will be implemented by summer workers. Eighteen of the 30 communities already selected for voter registration activity, Freedom Schools and community centers will be spearheaded by NAACP branches located within the respective areas of activity.

"Freedom" registrars will be established in every precinct, with registration books

closely resembling the official books of the state. The "Freedom" registration books will serve as a basis for challenging the official books and the validity of "official" Federal elections this fall.

Finally, voter registration workers will assist in the summer campaigns of Freedom candidates who will be running for Congress against party candidates designated by a minority of white voters.

Community Centers

In addition to the Freedom Schools, community centers will provide services normally denied Negro communities in Mississippi. Staffed by experienced social workers, nurses, librarians and teachers in the arts and crafts, the centers will provide educational and cultural programs for the community. Instructions will be given in prenatal and infant care and general hygiene among other subjects. Programs will provide adult literacy and vocational training. There is need for 30,000 books to be distributed through these centers. These adult centers will serve as places of political education and organization and will provide a structure through which to channel a wide range of programs into the Negro community in the future.

Research Project

The program of voter registration and political organization will attempt to change the fundamental structure of political and economic activity in Mississippi. In order to portray the situation authentically, extensive research will be required to probe into Mississippi's suppressive political and economic life. Skilled personnel is needed to carry out this program within the state as well as from outside.

White Community Project

The effort to organize and educate white Mississippians for democracy and decency can no longer be delayed. About 30 students, southern whites who have recently joined the civil rights movement, will begin pilot projects in white communities. An attempt will be made to activate white Mississippians to take steps toward eliminating bigotry, poverty and ignorance.

Law Students Project

A large number of law students and recent graduates will come to Mississippi to help launch a massive legal offensive against the official tyranny of the state. The time has come to challenge every Mississippi law which deprives Negroes of their rights, and to bring suit against every state and local official who, in the name of his office, denies these rights to Negro citizens. Qualified lawyers are needed to institute such suits.

Freedom Schools

An integral part of NAACP voter registration work is the development of leadership for politically emerging communities. Freedom Schools will begin to supply the political education which the existing system does not provide for Negroes in Mississippi.

The summer project will establish ten day-time Freedom Schools and three resident schools. The day-time school will be attended by 10th, 11th and 12th grade pupils. The schools will operate five days a week in the students' home towns. Instruction will be highly individualized, each school will have about fifteen teachers.

The program will include remedial work in reading, mathematics and basic grammar, as well as seminars in political science, public

administration, the humanities and English composition. Wherever possible, studies will be related to problems in the individual student's community.

The three resident schools will be attended by more advanced students from throughout the state. The program will be essentially the same as the day schools, with emphasis on political studies.

The students who attend the schools will provide Mississippi with a nucleus of leadership committed to critical thought and social action.

Progress in Mississippi Depends on You

The Mississippi summer program needs money now to establish and support the activities set forth above. The disenfranchised Negroes of Mississippi are asking the people of America, and especially members and supporters of civil rights organizations, to contribute now to assist the Mississippi State Conference of the NAACP in its commitment to the struggle for justice and freedom in the State of Mississippi.

Any amount of money contributed will be of help. For example:

- \$5.00 will purchase material for one voter registration school.
- \$25.00 will pay the utility bills for one Freedom School for the summer.
- \$50.00 will buy office materials for one voter registration field office.
- \$100.00 will buy materials for a home nursing and baby-care class for one community center.
- \$125.00 will buy one tape recorder for a voter registration center or a Freedom School.

- \$400.00 will provide scholarship money for one southern Negro college student enabling him to return to school after working in Mississippi for the summer.
- \$2,000.00 will rent and remodel a building for one Freedom center.
- \$3,000.00 will buy one used bus for transporting vote workers and registrants.

Send your contribution to "Operation Mississippi," Mississippi State Conference NAACP, 1072 Lynch Street, Jackson, Mississippi, Aaron Henry, President, Charles Evers, Secretary. Make check or money order out to Mississippi State Conference NAACP.

Trained Personnel Is Needed

**Special Call
to NAACP College Chapters
North and South**

For Applications Write:

Operation Freedom
Mississippi State Conference NAACP
1072 Lynch Street, Room 7
Jackson, Mississippi
Phone: FL 3-6906

Applications Must Be Received by May 25th

LET'S FINISH THE JOB

**SUPPORT THE MISSISSIPPI NAACP
FREEDOM PROGRAM**