

Future of Paid Movement Organizing in the South

The present direction of the movement in the South indicates an overnight change in its workings. Federal pressure under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and under the proposed voting act of 1965 combined with a nationwide sympathy for the Black Belt provide a basis for real freedom in the local area. But if local people can do more and if there are more tools available, then simple protests developed and led by a few people provide no meaningful program on which to develop a lasting change.

Typical questions the movement tried to answer last year were:

How do we stop the pressure of the local sheriff?
How do we get the vote?
When does the next bomb explode?

Typical questions the movement is trying to start to answer this year are:

When I get my vote, how do I use it?
What kind of government gives my children the best education they can get?
How can my farm be improved to give me a real working wage?
If both white and Negro schools are so bad, why doesn't the government improve them?

To deal with the increased complexity of the questions facing the movement the following proposals are made:

- (1) All existing task forces be phased out of existence as soon as there is a local movement in all Black Belt counties open to OCRE.
- (2) CORE change its policy to hiring as field staff only highly trained community organizers.
- (3) CORE put money into local hands in local areas by having the organizers hire whatever assistance he needs in the local area itself.

The training of the organizers should include:

- (1) Extensive political background
- (2) Economic background in at least one area of the following:
 - a. Farms
 - b. Unions or labor organizing
 - c. Community services
 - d. Education
- (3) 3 to 6 months in field situations similar to ones where his work will ultimately be carried out.

The organizer will work in depth in one area, developing a program around the issue of his competency. Part of the organizer's job is to share his competency and to develop local ability both to take over the program and to share it with other areas. Increased communication with other local movements (see memo on The New Movement in Mississippi) combined with the newly trained local people will ideally spread successful projects fairly rapidly.

In line with this suggestion the present Mississippi Task Force should be entirely phased out of the 4th Congressional District in Mississippi by January 1, 1966. By that time the task force is to be replaced by 5 organizers (say 2 farm, 1 union, 1 school, and 1 community services.)