

The staff of the Southwest Georgia Project has for the past two weeks been engaged in an analysis of our work over the last five months in an effort to evaluate what has happened and to determine where we need to go from here. Although nothing conclusive in terms of future program or defined ideology may be gleaned from our discussions, it is apparent that our work in the field has given us a more mature insight into the problems which confront us both internally and externally, and that we must move into a new phase of activity if we are to consolidate and expand the work done thus far. In this paper I shall attempt to review the activities of the Project to date; evaluate these activities and the Project in general; discuss the development and evolution of our philosophy; and indicate probable future efforts. Because of the youth and inexperience of our group, it would be naive and irresponsible to pretend that we have found the formula which will rectify the sins of our country--maybe through rectification--or that we have discovered the way of life which is the ideal for the revolutionary "Christian" man, but we are struggling as best we can to find workable solutions to these problems.

Review of Activities to Date:

A. Political Activity: From the middle of September through the first of December we were embroiled, along with every other interest group in Southwest Georgia, in the struggle to obtain representation in the governmental affairs of Georgia. The southwest sector of Georgia includes twenty-two counties and composes the second Congressional District of the state. We are presently working in eight of these counties. It is a black belt section which means that at least 40% of the population is black. Despite this fact, because of it, not a single elected office in the district is held by a black man. This means that almost a majority (in some counties as high as two-thirds) of the population has no political voice. The assumption behind this statement is that a white politician, regardless of how liberal or enlightened he may be, cannot and will not represent the interests of the black man in anything but a paternalistic manner. It is therefore imperative that political power in the tangible form of elected officials must be realized by the black community. To this end, the Southwest Georgia Project has been working for several months trying to get black people to register and to run candidates in local elections. Americus, Cordele and Sylvester, three cities in which we have been actively working, did qualify candidates for city commissioner elections. Though none of the candidates won the ultimate victory, in each case, there were several major gains as well as several sobering mistakes and disappointments.

In Americus, Georgia, Rev. J. R. Campbell, the chairman of the Sumter County Movement, ran for the position of city alderman. Americus is a town which has been ridden by racial strife and violence centering around white intransigence toward opening political-economic positions to black people. Rev. Campbell was one of the leaders in the voter registration drive during the summer of 1965 which was marked by violence. He was well known and resp