

WASHINGTON SUMMER ACTION PROJECT - Some theory behind it.

People active in various protest movements in the country have always talked about the need for communication between movements. They have talked in terms of sharing ideas and manpower, and generally strengthening each other. But in the past very little actual work has been done to get people talking with each deeply enough to begin to overcome more superficial differences. Some of us see this summer as an opportunity to begin the long-awaited dialogue between activists in various political struggles. This summer in Washington there will be many different groups coming to the city to lobby and take other forms of action. Peace groups will be active around the questions of the war in Vietnam; some civil rights groups will be active concerning the challenge to Congress of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, others will be lobbying for the new voting bill; perhaps some labor groups will be lobbying for 14B and for repeal of the right-to-work law.

What we would like to do is provide a forum for discussion between these different "interest groups" by setting up workshops in the Washington area that would run continuously all summer.

When the question of "working together" comes up, the objection is always raised that it would simply "diffuse peoples' energies," that without a particular concentrated effort by a smaller group of "specialized people" all of the movements would suffer. But the reality is that now the political climate of this country is such that all independent political action is under fire. Johnson seems intent on co-opting at least the visible movements in the country as he has done so successfully with a great portion of the civil rights movement. HUAC's target is any progressive movement including the civil rights movement. We are becoming more and more convinced that the only hope we have of checking Johnson's increasingly "independent" and dangerous foreign policy is with the development of a deeply based "critique" of his actions -- so deeply based it could not be ignored.

The only chance there is for conservative forces in the country (which are now in power) to kill currently existing independent voices of protest is if these voices remain isolated from one another. The only place movements have to draw strength from is each other. In the past, movements have died, have grown stagnant and left only the bureaucratic skeletons of their former strength. If we are to take hold of the activity which is existent today and build something strong, broadly based, that reaches deeply to the people who most need the change it seeks, then we must begin our work now.

The Washington Summer Action Project would be such a beginning.

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Idea: organization of workshops in Washington and project areas around the country.

Purpose: to begin numerous discussions wherever possible between organizers in the various independent political movements that are now a part of the country's radical politics.

Projected goal: that out of such discussion and exchange of opinions we could begin to see our way to developing common programs as part of a new and broad social movement.

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In order for such a dialogue to be meaningful it will have to take place on at least three different levels:

1.) the people in communities around the country who have begun to organize in order to confront the country with their problems will come together in meetings, workshops and conventions to discover their own sources of strength.

2.) we will have to provide some mechanism for the "leaders" or visible figures in various movements to talk with each other about the possibility of common action. M.L.King's speaking out strongly about Vietnam is heartening proof that such a mechanism is feasible.

3.) what we are specifically concerned with here is the "organizer" -- the people in various movements or organizations who are responsible for the work that keeps it alive. These workshops will mostly involve this set of people.

The method we are using is to reach those areas of the country which we see as loci of activity: the South, the West Coast, urban ghetto areas, universities, etc.

In Washington:

People involved -- 1.) SPU, CNVA, Women Strike for Peace, etc. will be in and out of Washington all summer lobbying and participating in various activities in an attempt to end the war in Vietnam.

2.) MFDP - There will be a number of people rotating into Washington all summer lobbying for the unseating of the regular Mississippi congressmen in connection with the congressional challenge of the MFDP.

3.) NCC and other religious oriented groups will be in the area lobbying for the voting bill and for the unseating of the Mississippi "congressmen" as well as against our role in Vietnam.

Our program would involve reaching all of these groups of people and bringing them together in workshops to discuss:

|                           |                |                      |              |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------|
| poverty                   | peace          | community organizing | HUAC         |
| campus organizing         | MFDP challenge | labor problems       | South Africa |
| foreign policy in general |                |                      |              |

with the hope that the discussions would clarify the connections which thread these many problems together. Hopefully they would result in the creation of common programs in which people could work together so as to strengthen a general movement toward the integrity of individuals and the promotion of independent thought and action -- while at the same time allowing individuals to feel that they would not be taking their energies away from what they conceive as "the most crucial problem" faced by the country or the world today.

Mechanics: An office has been set up in Washington to coordinate the workshops there and to provide all kinds of materials and information for people who come into Washington this summer to participate in action and/or lobbying. Address: 107 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.

In the South: There will be a series of small workshops for volunteers working in SNCC projects in Arkansas, in CORE projects in Louisiana and for the FDP in Miss., held at the Mount Beulah Center near Jackson. These workshops will be an extension of those taking place in Washington. Volunteers will have a chance while still in the South to talk about some of the deep personal changes they are experiencing, as well as discussing the broader implications of their work and the relation of work in the South to Vietnam, poverty, organized terrorism and war, education, etc. They will meet by the region of the country they are from and be able to get information about about new movement activity in the North before they make plans for fall. At each workshop there will be resource people from various action groups, films and materials. These workshops may feed into an end of summer south-wide meeting for all volunteers working in civil rights projects across the south.

(Draft prepared by working group of the Washington Summer Action Project.)

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