

undated

THE SUMMER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL EDUCATION PROJECT
OF THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The SCOPE project of SCLC is an attack on the three basic problems of the South, and in particular, on the problems of the "Southern Negro," disfranchisement, educational deprivation, and poverty. Hopefully it will be a starting point for projects which will continue working on the eradication of these problems in the years ahead.

Organizationally the SCOPE project will emphasize the establishment of autonomous college groups which will "adopt" and work in selected counties throughout the South. At least six hundred volunteers from the academic community will participate in the project, three hundred in six major urban counties and three hundred in forty rural counties. In many of the rural counties it will be possible to more than quadruple the Negro vote. In the urban counties the Negro vote can be doubled.

Coupled with voter registration work will be political education and adult education programs and efforts to initiate "war on Poverty" projects.

Colleges willing to participate in the SCOPE project will form three major categories; (1) those who are able to establish "permanent" campus SCOPE groups, to "adopt" a county, to send a SCOPE project unit into their county for the summer, and to continue working with their county in the future, (2) those who will form a SCOPE project group to work in a selected Southern county for the summer; and (3) those who will be able to send two or three volunteers to participate in some phase of the project. The following is intended to give detailed information essential to all three categories, although it will appear directed primarily to colleges of the first category.

The first step on each campus is to organize a campus SCOPE group which will be a long term campus organization formed to recruit students, screen volunteers, organize a SCOPE project unit, raise money, and continue in the years ahead to organize projects for their county or counties in the South. This organization should have a chairman-some influential person on campus who will give the influence of his name to the SCOPE group, a director-who will be in charge of the group, a secretary, a treasurer, a publicity agent, and members, active and advisory. The group should form four committees, for recruitment, screening, finances and treasurer, and publicity agent.

There are many ways to recruit students. Posters, brochures and buttons are available from SCLC in Atlanta. Films on voter registration, political education and civil rights are also available to show at small meetings of interested persons. In many cases it may be necessary to hold larger mass meetings to activate students. SCLC will try to send speakers to address these meetings if notified well in advance. In many areas there are friends of SCLC who are well known for their role in the struggle for human rights and would be willing address recruitment mass meetings. SCLC will contact these persons if asked. Advertisements or articles in campus newspapers and spots on the campus radio station have proven effective. Religious, social, and international groups are usually very cooperative in introducing the program to their members. These are just a few suggested avenues of approaches. Since every college differs, the local recruitment committee will be the best judge of the methods to use on their campus. Persons of all skills are needed in the SCOPE project. In order to handle the correspondence, bookkeeping, and general paper work connected with the SCOPE project, at least fifteen volunteers will be needed in Atlanta SCLC headquarters. These volunteers would need to be skilled typists, stenographers or bookkeepers. For this reason contact should be made with the larger community to interest particularly typists and teachers in the project. Persons who wish to apply as individuals rather than as members of a unit should send applications directly to SCLC, Atlanta.

When the campus SCOPE chapter has recruited a number of volunteers a SCOPE Project unit should be formed. This is the unit that will work in the "adopted" county during the summer. It should have a director.

A screening committee of four or five persons, faculty members and students should be formed to consider all applications. Names, addresses, and phone numbers of screening committee should be sent to SCLC in Atlanta. SCOPE application forms will then be mailed to the committee chairman. Everyone who is interested in working can be of help, so screening committees should not be overly rigorous in their judging of volunteers. Working on civil rights in the South requires dedication, courage, and maturity; however, these qualities can, and have been acquired by many seemingly dilettante young college students. Any person old enough to go to college is old enough to work on voter registration - Negro high school students have formed the backbone of voter registration projects throughout the South. No person is too old - in several Southern communities white persons over seventy years of age have participated in much more strenuous civil rights demonstrations. Everyone who will work is needed. It will be up to the screening committee to weed out persons who they feel are incorrigible trouble-makers, or impossible to work with. All completed application forms should be sent back to the SCOPE headquarters at SCLC, Atlanta, before mid April for a final check. In the event that a SCOPE worker turns out to be a persistent trouble-maker, SCLC

will retain the right to disassociate him from the project. This has not been a major problem in similar projects.

When the campus SCOPE chapter has recruited a number of volunteers a SCOPE project unit should be formed. This is the unit that will work in the "adopted" county during the summer. It should have a director, treasurer, secretary, etc. depending on the size of the unit, and be organized to work in the county. The names, addresses, and phone numbers of these administrative personnel should be sent to SCLC, Atlanta.

The SCOPE project unit will need, ideally, a car for each six SCOPE workers. This would provide transportation for workers and material to and from the summer project.

Cars will also be needed in the counties to assist in transporting persons to and from the registrars' office. Some counties will have local transportation, but the more cars available for this work the better. SCOPE project units should also equip themselves with basic school supplies such as paper, pencils, pens, chalk, blackboards, etc. These essentials are necessary to conduct adult citizenship classes and political education programs. They will also be needed if the local SCOPE unit sponsors a tutorial project. Each SCOPE unit should have typewriters and a mimeograph machine for office work. Accurate and comprehensive records of the summers' work are essential for long range continuity and success. Although each unit will need essential office materials, the urban units should be especially well equipped.

A major problem of each SCOPE unit, as with all civil rights groups, will be finances. Each SCOPE worker should be able to meet expenses for (1) travel to and from the project location and (2) Room and board at \$10.00 a week for ten weeks on location.

In addition, it is hoped that each SCOPE unit will be able to raise funds for (1) gas to be used in voter registration work and (2) enabling Southern Negro college students to work with the project (about \$150.00). Several methods for raising these additional funds can be employed. Each SCOPE unit could conduct a "SCOPE Fund Drive" on campus. This will not only give wider publicity to SCOPE, but will also permit those unable to give their summer to contribute financially. Campus fund drives might include the sale of SCOPE buttons, door-to-door request for assistance, etc. Financial aid might also be sought from other campus organizations or clubs. The student government, political clubs, individual classes, religious organizations, and all other groups which have funds or access to funds. In short, the SCOPE project should be thoroughly explained and financial support requested of all persons and organizations on campus. The campus SCOPE chapter should also make contact with their surrounding communities. Again, the process of explanation and request for support should occur. This contact will not only assist in financing SCOPE this summer, but will provide a significant break through by spreading information about the work being done in the South. Faculty members will be particularly helpful in establishing contacts in the local communities. Local churches, labor groups, and business organizations and campus hang-outs might be a good starting point in the campus community fund raising phase. Finally, campus SCOPE members should contact their home communities. Many students will return home for spring vacation, at this time they could contact churches, labor groups, business organizations, and personal friends in an effort to raise money for their SCOPE unit. This will allow people in home communities to gain knowledge of the civil rights movement and contribute to it.

It is usually easier to get contributions from individuals if they have a definite idea of what their contribution will pay for. For example, the idea of having persons pay for so many miles of voter registration work (at 2¢ a mile for gas) may be helpful.

To help prepare SCOPE workers for the summer, SCLC has drawn up a required reading list: The People Who Walk In Darkness - Shulte Nordholte, Southern Politics by V. O. Key, Jr., Freedom Road by Howard Fast, and How to Win COPE (AFL-CIO). All of the above are available in paperback. This reading list, however, is minimal. Supplementary reading from a more extensive list available from SCLC in Atlanta is highly recommended to increase knowledge and understanding.

Workers should also familiarize themselves with federal aid programs; SCLC is in the process of compiling a "kit" which includes information on the job corps, Community Action projects, and Neighborhood Youth Program of the Economic Opportunity Act. etc. A working knowledge of these programs is necessary if SCOPE units are to help initiate projects in their "adopted" counties. It might be helpful for SCOPE project units to hold discussion sessions in order to share insights and questions; this will also help build a working relationship among members.

Campus SCOPE chapters should inform the SCLC Atlanta office of the approximate number of volunteers they will send. SCLC will then send a suggested project county list and the chapter will select a county. Upon notification of the selection, SCLC will supply basic information on the "adopted" county. Local chapters should then write the recommended county leaders to establish initial contact.

During the spring SCLC Staff will visit all project counties. They will set up offices and equip them with desks, chairs, voter registration and political education materials, maps etc. SCLC staff will also work with local leaders and organizations in preparing the counties for the summer. They will secure housing for volunteers and conduct ground work in finding local volunteers to assist SCOPE workers. High School volunteer workers will play a significant part. In many counties it has been high school students who have done the bulk of the voter registration work. These students will be invaluable in helping SCOPE project workers.

SCOPE project workers will report for orientation session on Sunday, June 14. Regional orientations will be held from June 15-18; the locations for training are being selected. Sessions will consist of intensive classes conducted by SCLC staff and other recognized civil rights authorities.

Orientation will proceed on the assumption that all required and some supplementary reading has been done by all workers. Areas to be covered in the session include 1) procedure and problems in voter registration, 2) general theory and practice of Southern politics (history, state elections, laws, etc.) 3) present structure and needed changes in Southern economics, 4) Federal Aid programs (Hill-Burton Act, Economic Opportunity Act, Small Business Loans etc), 5) the applications and implications of non-violence, 6) the Citizenship Education Program (workers will be trained to become Citizenship School Teachers 7) Negro history, and 8) history of the movement. These sessions will allow time for creative discussion and questions between volunteers and orientation staff.

On June 19, workers will travel to their field assignments. On June 20 and 21st workers will meet local leaders, get offices organized, and get the feel of their communities.

Top priority in the SCOPE project will be given to voter registration. The SCOPE unit will work hand-in-hand with the local organization (SCLC affiliate, voter league, Improvement Association, etc.) on this phase of the project. Canvassing will be done by teams of two, one SCOPE worker and one local volunteer, or two local volunteers. Canvassing kits will be supplied by the Atlanta SCLC office. Cars will be needed to transport persons to the registrar's office. The local organization will be expected to get local people to volunteer to use their cars for this purpose. Unfortunately this will not always be possible, since most of the local people will be poor and unable to afford to drive their cars without getting some money for gas. With this in mind, it is hoped that the SCOPE workers will be able to get persons in their home communities to "carry people down to register" i.e. to pledge a certain number of miles (2¢ a mile for gas) in voter registration work. Gas money is the largest single expense in any voter registration project; SCOPE units are urged to carefully consider their county in advance and attempt to raise sufficient funds for this part of the program. In most counties where SCOPE units will be working it will not be too difficult to register people. However, in some it will be necessary to have night classes to teach illiterate persons how to fill out the questionnaires given them. SCLC has summaries of state election laws for the states being worked, and sample questionnaires. They will be sent to campus SCOPE project groups once they have been assigned a county.

Due to the years of exclusion from the democratic governing process, it is essential that a political education program be carried out in each county worked by a SCOPE unit. This program will consist of training in basic political organizations. It will include teaching precinct level politics, techniques of voter registration, methods of getting out a vote, maximal use of political power for community benefit, how to run good candidates, etc. Materials and curriculum will be supplied by the Atlanta SCLC office. At the orientation session SCOPE workers will be given the basic training needed to organize and teach these classes.

The South has a crushing problem of adult illiteracy. In Georgia alone almost half of the Negro population over twenty-five is functionally illiterate (has less than four years of formal education.) In an effort to meet this need, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference several years ago set up a Citizenship Education Program that is now successfully operating in eleven Southern states. SCOPE workers with teaching ability will be asked to volunteer as citizenship school teachers. Materials and curriculum will be supplied by the Citizenship Education Department of SCLC, and workers wishing to volunteer as teachers will receive training at the orientation session. Each teacher will hold two classes a week in local homes. The standard curriculum covers basic skills in arithmetic, reading and writing, the American system of government, and fundamentals of economics such as writing checks, banking, and budgeting. Each campus SCOPE group should inform the Atlanta office of how many members of their unit will be willing to act as citizenship school teachers so that preparations can be made to have sufficient materials available.

In many of the counties covered by the SCOPE project the average individual income for Negroes is less than one thousand dollars a year. Although President Johnson considers

three thousand dollars the poverty line, the "War on Poverty" will never reach these people without outside assistance. This is due to the recalcitrance of the local white power structure. SCOPE workers should familiarize themselves with the Economic Opportunities Act, and particularly the sections of it dealing with Community Action Programs, and Neighborhood Youth Corps projects. Brochures on these programs are available from the federal government. Information on how to obtain these, plus information on how to set about organizing projects in a community is in the kit on federal aid programs available from the Atlanta SCLC office. In each county SCOPE workers will need to work with local Negro leaders to analyze the particular problems of the community and formulate plans for an effective program. It is important at this point to get the support of influential local whites, if the programs are to succeed. This will take diplomacy and dedication to the reconciling principles of non-violence, but it will be possible in some counties.

Some colleges may wish to include a tutorial program in their SCOPE project. This would be a program designed to give Negro grade school and/or high school students a part of the education they have been denied as Negroes in a Southern community. Programs of this sort will have to be left entirely to interested colleges, since SCLC does not have the materials or curriculum necessary. However, a college interested in setting up a tutorial program can be supplied with the names and addresses of persons who have conducted such programs successfully in the South.

In every county SCOPE units will work hand-in-hand with local Negro civic improvement associations. The local organization will supply the vital link between the SCOPE workers and the Negro community as a whole. It will assist workers in voter registration and other projects, give and seek advice on a multitude of problems, recruit volunteers, organize mass meetings, and try and provide cars for voter registration work. If the SCOPE project is to be a real success, SCOPE workers need to remember that their primary objective is to help create dynamic local leadership in the form of persons and groups that will continue to attack the problems of their community in the years ahead.

Although emphasis is placed on the autonomy of local SCOPE units, trained SCLC field staff will help the units get functioning in their communities. SCLC field supervisors will be stationed in each four county area throughout the summer. They will assist SCOPE units, act as trouble shooters if problems arise. SCOPE units will be expected to submit weekly reports to headquarters in Atlanta so that individual programs can be assessed, and help can be sent to needy areas.

For additional information write:

SCOPE
SCLC
334 Auburn Avenue. N. E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Or phone:

404 - 522 - 1420

Additional suggested reading:

The Negro in Politics - Price
Balance of Power - Henry Moon
Nearly Victorious - Ossie Davis
The Souls of Black Folk - W.E. DuBois
Biography of Frederick Douglas - Phillip Forner
Peace, Prejudice & Class - Oliver Wendell Cox

The Fire Next Time - James Baldwin
The Negro Revolution - Louis Lomax

Additional orientation topics:

Living conditions in the South.
Attitudes, self discipline, protection, and security.
Detailed information about communities.
Community organization and problems.
Problems faced by Northerners working in the South.
Philosophy of non-violence.