

Outline for Residential Freedom School Program

The idea of bringing young Negroes of high school age from northern urban ghettos together with adolescents from southern communities began to take concrete form directly after Xmas when students from McComb met with Harlem youth for a brief time. Initially, the confrontation for both was somewhat overwhelming. Yet, it seemed as though an arena for raising and relating certain basic issues, such as violence vs. nonviolence, why vote in the north, etc. was begun; these talks seemed to have sparked an interest for deeper discussions.

Thereafter, Judy Richardson, Sherron Jackson, and Nancy Cooper began to discuss how SNCC could best help provide an atmosphere in which young people from both areas could come together in a community for a period of time in order to make clearer the relationships between conditions in northern and southern slums; thus, recognizing the similarities of needs and perhaps, the students could begin to develop some kind of working relationship that can extend beyond state lines, and in which exploration for meaningful alternatives can be sought.

Because of the late date, we felt there should be one school for the duration of 6 weeks. The first three weeks will be in Chicago and the remaining three weeks will be in Cordele, Georgia. We are planning to locate a daily discussion center in Chicago and students will be housed in the community. In Cordele, the site will be Gillespie Selden Center, and here too, students will find homes in the community. The entire 6-week program will involve 100 students (more would be unworkable), the ratio from north and south being equal. It was felt that the sites need to be located in the midst of a community life, rather than removed. The reason for this is that students can develop programs and ideas best when their immediate experiences are directly linked to what they want to learn.

Recruitment - northern students and high school drop-outs from various ghetto areas; N.Y., Chicago, Boston, L.A., etc. Recruitment can be channeled chiefly through people who have been working in different areas, such as John Churchville, Philadelphia, Noel Day, Roxbury, Tom Hayden, Newark, Jimmy Garret, L.A., Monroe and Fanny, Chicago, and Sherron Jackson, Harlem. We should, however, attempt to get a number of youths from each area so that a stronger nucleus can be strengthened. Recruitment for southern students should lie mainly in the hands of staff who best know the young people in their own areas.

Staff needed - a maximum number of 4 - 6 people will be needed to stay with the schools in their initial stages. All staff is encouraged to participate in the sessions.

An emphasis will be made to make resource people and materials available so that the students themselves can choose that which they want. As for curriculum - it should be developed as much as possible by the students themselves.

Funds - the school sites or discussion centers and the homes will most likely cost almost nothing. Students should be encouraged to raise as much of their own money as is possible. In this way, the community can become informed of the program and an interest can be created, and hopefully, sustained through communication. The only large cost seems to lie in the area of food, (try to raise this in the community) and for travel costs for both students and resource visitors. We will try to raise the needed money through private grants and special fund raising.

Hopefully, these can be some of the things that can develop out of this program:

- 1) Some type of channels can be created to provide a working relationship between northern and southern youths. Perhaps, a national high school conference can be called at the close of the summer, on which these 100 students can work on. This should concentrate on bringing students from the same home areas together to discuss their experiences, and thus,
- 2) forming a nucleus of strong leadership, especially important for northern areas, who upon returning home can involve more students in either already existing programs or in creating new projects for students to participate in.
- 3) We might be looking toward some similar program which can be on-going, all year round. In the north, where so many, many young people cannot bear to attend school and who wallow in despair, these very students may wish to continue a freedom school program in their own areas. Also, in the south, those who have discontinued in the regular public schools, such as in Issaquena County, they too, may develop a school in which other southern students can participate.

When are you + Charles going to meet on the Washington thing?

Budget needs:

transportation for students and resource visitors
audio-visual aids
resource materials and daily upkeep