

PROPOSAL FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
TO SOUTHERN NEGRO STUDENTS ENGAGED IN ORGANIZING ACTIVITIES
IN ALABAMA FOR THE
STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
(JUNE thru SEPT., 1966)

Since 1960, and before, Negroes in Alabama have been "fear stricken". Negroes who have attempted to register to vote to eliminate the many conditions of political, social, and economic exclusion that they have been experiencing have been the victims of overt violence and continued practices of discrimination throughout this state.

Negro youths learn very early in life that they are to be separated from other people. It is the process which conveys to them feelings of worthlessness, uselessness, fear and intimidation.

It is disheartening to see the "colored" signs throughout the Black Belt of Alabama, the stepping into the gutter to stay clear of the whites, the hang-dog spirit, the menial jobs, and the sheriff, the deputies, and the Klan on their routine rounds and also their deadly missions.

Since 1960, solidarity and unity have been preached extensively in the Negro communities by the local Negro youths and civil rights workers. Integration is proceeding tortuously. Alabama Negroes see the necessity of franchisement in order to achieve their basic goals of higher standards of living and an equal voice in government and law enforcement in the Black Belt where they comprise approximately fifty per cent of the voting age population.

The movement is now in phase two in the Black Belt of Alabama.

Alabama youths are working the movement county by county organizing independent parties, similar to the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, but independent of any traditional political parties.

Alabama law provides that an organization of qualified electors will be declared a legal party within a county if the candidates nominated by that organization gets 20% of the vote in a general election within that county. This means that Alabama Negroes can organize locally to run against racist mayors, sheriffs, tax assessors, etc.

SNCC workers have begun intensive organizing campaigns in five Alabama counties: Lowndes, Greene, Wilcox, Sumter and Macon. Organizing is around voter registration, political education and ASOS election drives. Despite a chronic lack of operating funds and resources, these workers have begun to include the excluded Negro poor in decision making processes and in experimenting with new politics that hopefully will include every citizen of the Alabama Black Belt.

The energy for this political thrust, freedom parties, has to come from the victims of political exclusion. It becomes necessary in Alabama to develop a political environment where the organization and organizational participation of the people becomes more important than the politicians' platform. (The right of people to make decisions about their own lives is the most fundamental right that a member of a democratic society can have. And this is the perspective from which the concept of freedom organizations evolved.)

The work cannot continue unless added workers enter the rural counties.

Young Alabama Negroes, excluded and deprived, know that they must use all their energies and concentration toward justice in Alabama. These Alabama youths regard this work in organizing around freedom parties as one of the most hopeful developments of the past five years of the civil rights movement in Alabama.

They are the force that will carve the destiny of the Negro in Black Belt Alabama.

These workers cannot be supported by SNCC's slim budget.

Although the full time staff of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee is both interracial and representative of all sections of America and all groupings in society, it is composed primarily of Southern Negroes. These young men and women have helped sustain the Southern civil rights movement, often at great personal sacrifice, involving discontinuing their schooling for one or two years.

Many young Negro students, hoping for a college education are reluctant to join our efforts even on a temporary basis if such association will mean hindering their chance for a higher education. No one can save for an education on a SNCC salary of \$10 to \$20 a week.

We propose to aid those Negro college students and high school graduates who want to participate in a summer's voter registration and community organization activity, but who must work for profit during the summer

months to insure tuition and costs for the coming school year. This budget we suggest will sustain, for sixteen weeks, fifteen or twenty Negro Alabama college students or high school graduates with a desire to further their education. The enrollees will be paid the regular SNCC field stipend of \$10 per week, with figures running as high as \$40 for married persons. At the conclusion of a summer's work, they will receive ~~\$150~~ ^{\$300} paid to their college, if they are already enrolled, or placed into a scholarship fund in their behalf, if they are seeking admission to college.

Subsistence for ⁵⁰ ~~20~~ local
Negro students at ~~\$10~~ ^{\$10} per
week for 16 weeks

~~\$8,000.00~~ ⁰⁰
~~\$5,200.00~~

\$150.00 assured at the termination
of the working period for tuition
to an institution of higher
learning for ~~20~~ ⁵⁰ local Negro
students

~~\$15,000.00~~ ⁰⁰
~~\$3,000.00~~

An individual commitment to the
subsistence and tuition of one
Negro student @ \$10.00 per week
for 16 weeks and ~~\$15.00~~ ^{\$3.00} for
tuition

\$ 310.00

Shirley Wright
Freedom Force
Student Nonviolent
Coordinating Committee

\$300 for one
year's tuition