

Box 8
JULY

Atlanta, Georgia - called because it is the capital of the South. It is a city of about 450,000 people. It is the largest city in Georgia and the second largest in the state of Mississippi.

Friday, June 10, 1966

The bulk of the afternoon discussion was taken up with the Meredith March, which evolved into a discussion on the rôle of SNCC within the "established" civil rights movement.

Stokley opened by describing how we (SNCC) got involved in the March, and what he saw our rôle as within the motion of the March. His two major points as to why we had to join were:

The march would serve as an indictment of President Johnson over the fact that existing laws were not being enforced; to put pressure the Movement as a whole to join in this indictment.

Black Mississippians as a whole were supporting the March.

Our rôle within the March as Stokley saw it was:

to begin to build strong independent community organizations. The beginning of that building is by letting the march be in the control of black Mississippians, which would mean we would have to organize in communities along the march route.

people relating to the concept of Black Power

question of violence and nonviolence was coming to a head on the March.

Other arguments in favor of the March as expressed were:

consequences of not participating greater than our participating; isolation from this motion is unrealistic

March has acted as catalyst for great deal of motion at various levels

SNCC is presented forum in the black community

students from Alcorn College, working with Bob Smith, are backbone of March

Courtland Cox expressed opposition to the March. His criticisms were:

The march was because of what happened to Meredith, the name, not what happened to a black man. "If another Negro gets shot, what will our responsibility to that?"

The march absorbs the energy of black people.

The same people who kill Negroes are protecting the March, and will kill Negroes when the March is over.

We do not need a march to do the real work of organizing. People should be working around the issues of the community, not the march.

"Are we going to ask the federal government to do what they have not done, or ask Negroes to do what must be done?"

"... if we were using March to make ourselves

I. Report by Cleveland Sellers and Stanley Wise on S. W. Georgia

Brief oral report given; full report to be written up and distributed to members of the committee as soon as possible.

II. Report by Cleveland Sellers on Arkansas Project

Brief oral report given; full written report to be distributed to members of the committee as soon as possible.

III. Report by Cleveland Sellers on status of Staff Educational Program:

Meeting of consultants for educational program is scheduled for Atlanta on June 16-18. Members of the Central Committee who are interested are urged to attend.

IV. Report on South African Program: Miscellaneous comments by Courtland Cox, Charlie Cobb, and Cleveland Sellers

Written report and prospectus to be prepared for next central committee meeting.

V. "Cultural" Program for SNCC: comments by Courtland Cox and discussion by committee.

-- written report to be prepared for next Central Committee meeting to serve a basis for a more coherent discussion.

points raised to be included:

Needed.

Some definition or set of guidelines on exactly what a "cultural program" is or should be for SNCC

— e.g., History, art, a community's social life, etc., are these all a part of a program? if so, how do they fit together? What else does such a program entail?

— should such a program have political objectives? if so, what are they?

— prospects for staffing such a project?

— facilities and other resources necessary to begin?

— is SNCC prepared to initiate such a program?

— how would it relate to other things? e.g. current movements in the theatre, various other black programs, etc.

— some discussion of the context of a SNCC program, which would hopefully give it better definition.

Saturday, June 11

The need to define our objectives as an organization was discussed. That was begun through a discussion on the difference between policy and objectives.

Policy was loosely defined as the regulations within the organization that will keep us moving along the program lines aimed for certain objectives. It was generally agreed that SNCC had policies that much of the organization knew nothing or little about - such as our policy statement on HUAC. Our work should reflect the policy of the organization.

Members of the organization are responsible to the policy of the organization.

OBJECTIVES - background thinking

That is we are to consider ourselves revolutionary, we must define our political objectives and specific focus of action.

Change will come from outside of this country in the long run, the question is How do we move here to help facilitate the development of those external forces for change. The necessary motion for change will not come automatically, therefore it is necessary for us to plan now, an outline of our activities until 1972.

There must be a combination of internal and external pressure for change; we have to look at our role in both contexts and remember that these forces are closely interwoven in many respects. It is important for us to define the degree of change that we are talking about. Internally, we have to define the role of people within this country. People here must respond to oppression that is immediately around them. We must understand that this response has a considerable impact around the world in that it gives "outside forces" understanding and hope that there is at least some movement for change inside this country. Consequently we have to maintain the "day to day" struggles.

There are two questions that this raises:

1. How do we begin to accelerate internal motion within this country?
2. How do we begin to move to unite these struggles and groups?

Probably only after nations outside of this country achieve independence (or economic power) will they be free to deal with forces for change within this country. The motion for change within this country, affects the course of that drive for economic independence. A key problem that this raises is that once healthy motion for change begins within this country, we don't know how to protect that motion and thus allow external forces to use it fully (the Mississippi march is an example of this).

OBJECTIVES

Our current objective should be to get political control of the black belt south. A longer range objective should be to work in the urban areas. We probably aren't ready yet to deal with urban areas, but we need to move staff into these areas now to begin to get some knowledge of urban areas. If we can get black people in Watts, Harlem, etc. to feel that Lowndes - the Black Panther - is theirs, and it is their responsibility to protect it, it could be the first visible hook-up between urban and rural areas.

Need to discuss a 6-year program that will allow us to move, establish government with the questions that are growing

The question is: How do we protect black people who will be acquiring this power? National and on the county level. How do we establish guidelines for people who acquire power. We certainly need a minimal staff commitment of four to five years.

If we consider these objectives building and consolidating black power, we have to answer these questions:

1. Where in the area we are working is the potential for political control a reality?
2. How many areas can we work adequately - effectively? There is a need to allocate and concentrate resources.
3. How do we develop personnel to do this work?
4. How can we "hook-up" and "link-up" these areas?
5. Can we exert leadership and build viable organizations under the Black Panther symbol?

It is important that our strategy reinforce, protect, and keep internal (this country) forces moving and healthy. For example, once Lowndes County has a black sheriff, it must become an agitating force, protecting itself, and the movement. Its energy must be sustained. The question really is, What is radical political education, and how within a group like ours do you reinforce it. Statements of purpose, goals, etc., must have a context.

We have to understand more thoroughly, and build self-identity within the black community.

We have to define politics and economics. How are they different and how are they related.

How can we move on an industry? We have never faced this question here in the south, let alone the north. When you have political power, how do you then move to gain economic power. In Lowndes County, that is property, which is just not available on the market.

How do we approach the whole economic question? How do we then begin to think of disrupting the economy?

Wenhoe used Gary, Indiana as possibility to be considered. It's an industrial town, major portion of Negro community that works, works in steel industry, which is crucial to defense production. Negroes live in southern style.

The employment situation could be used in anti-war context.

Objectives of SNCC:

- end racism in America
- develop black consciousness
- change political and economic system which exploits black people
- develop concept of humanism

Programs of SNCC (programs will be geared to help implement objectives)

1. independent political force expressed through
 - a. development of county organizations not aligned to Democratic or Republican Party - nationally or locally
 - b. candidates running within the Democratic party who reject accepted administration policies, ie. Vietnam.

John Lewis reported on trips. Feathersone is in Japan. Four people are in the Soviet Union. Bob Fletcher, and Ike Coleman are to go to the Dominican Republic.

Trip to Israel seems off. Most organizations show no interest. Trying to develop international mailing list for students and organizations.

C Cuban ambassador called to extend invitation to Cuba July 10-30.

It was agreed by the committee that Gwen Robinson could go with delegation of women in peace movement to North Vietnam, and recommended that she write her daily impressions.

John Lewis offers his resignation. Motion for acceptance, killed.

Bob Mants resigns because both he and Cox out of county at same time. Accepted. Mants then elected as alternate.

Freedom singers

Marshal Jones and Chico Neblett wanted to discuss becoming commercial. The question remains unsettled as to whether they should remain salaried, and how proceeds would be distributed. Need of further discussion with the whole group.

Fund-raising

Mildred Forman will travel with Belafonte this summer to learn promotion. There is room for three other people. They can be placed in Belafonte's Public relations office to learn. Though geared to SNCC interest, this will be completely separate from SNCC. Hopefully, once the skills are gained, these people will bring money to the organization.

New York is the only purely fund raising office we have now. Ruby Doris will call meeting of northern offices and re-evaluate fund raising techniques, and the role of fund -raising and community organizing. She will have written report at next meeting.

Los Angeles

Forman gave a point of information: "Cliff had calls to speak in the black community People, from the established leadership of Brookings, to the gangs, are looking for a program for Watts.

There has been very strong positive reaction to what has been done in relationship to the Deadwyler hearing (statement that Watts secede from L. A.). Cliff was just responding to calls from the community. US (group of black militants) has encouraged the use of the black panther as a symbol."

Jim's point of information accepted.

Guyot

Stokley asked that Guyot be removed from staff because of direct conflicts in policy with McLaurin. Cox moved that this be accepted as point of information and that the body move on to another point.

Stokley continued to ask for something definite.

Committee seemed to agree that before action taken, Guyot would have to be pre-

Central Committee Meeting - Day 4 of the meeting, July 1968

Programs of SNCC CONT.

- 4. develop organizations on the campuses
- 5. economic
 - a. how do we deal with unions
 - b. co-ops

We should send these policies down and pass them to the staff so they know what our policies are. Our educational program should be geared to promote objectives. Policy is not independent of objectives and programs. But things will come up that calls for clarity on the part of this body where there is not some kind of policy. We cannot sit down and make a policy for everything.

Sunday June 12:

Land for SNCC center - Jim Forman

People trying to buy land, but no location has been selected. Mrs. Montgomery was going to sell some land in Missouri, but that was several months ago. Most people seem to feel that land should be in North Carolina, Georgia, or Tennessee, in terms of being centrally located. There is a possibility of Alabama, but we are still looking.

We need a place that could hold about 300 people, with from 150 to 200 rooms, in view of the fact that we may become and more unpopular, we are going to have to find somewhere to retreat. It is also important that this area be used to set up a program for people who have not even had grammar education, and that we be able to rent out the place to help pay for its upkeep. I will proceed looking for aland these lines.

There were no objections.

Communications - Charlie Cobb

Getting news and information out to field and other offices is a problem because there are not enough skilled people. Trying to arrange program with funds from OEO to train people to run the machines.

Impossible to beat the regular press, so we will have to slant news in particular direction. We are trying to develop internal comm communications, and are putting out news releases.

At this time, we cannot guarantee dates on any item that anyone wants produced.

Forman then explained the Southern Students Summer Institute which is being held by him in Atlanta to help take care of the need for efficient staff in the Atlanta office. The experimental orientation program is being geared to accomplish the following:

- 1. General skills development
 - a. public speaking
 - b. writing
- 2. Development of brain power
 - a. logic
 - b. propaganda analysis
- 3. Reconstruction history