PROSPECTUS FOR ATLANTA FOR THE WHITE SOUTHERN STUDENT PROJECT

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Atlanta is presently in the state of turmoil and change. The traditional image of Atlanta as the "model city" with "good race relations" is being challenged. The power structure has worked hard for years to create this false image. The initiative in attacking the image was taken by the students, and primarily by SNCC. But since SNCC and the young people did take the initiative in the movement, they received, and are receiving, a large amount of criticism. However, the adult community is now slowly becoming involved in the movement.

Among the student groups working in Atlanta is the Georgia Students for Human Rights. This group was organized about 3-4 weeks ago to give the students on the white campuses in Atlanta an outlet through which they could express their concerns about the problems that confront us today. It is primarily an action group dedicated to working for the civil rights and civil liberties of all people (black and white). They are involved in the civil rights struggle now, because that is the focal point in Atlanta at present. They have a constituency of 150 or more. GSHR is not a membership organization, but rather a participation group. To date the activities of the GSHR have been as follows:

1. Mass meetings
2. Picketing of restaurants
3. Distribution of 6000 prayer leaflets (10,000 more to be distributed during Lent) urging a boycott of downtown stores During Lent. This is similar to the call given to the Negro churches for the same thing by the Summit Conference.
4. Organization of local campus groups and holding meetings on each campus.
5. Hit and run sit-ins followed by negotiations with the managers of the restaurants.
6. Some of the Georgia Tech Students have been involved in an investigation by the state's Attorney General office.
7. Some training in nonviolence by C. T. Vivian.
8. Contacts with a number of adults and community leaders have been made and lay the ground work for future activities.
9. A group of Scott students are engaged in tutorials and working in the underdeveloped areas of Atlanta. Some Emory students are in tutorials.

The GSHR has an ongoing program and organization. At present its organization is very simple with a chairman (Rick Stevens), secretary (Judy Wiley), and committee chairman (Deadre LaPin). The various campuses (Ga. Tech, Emory, Agnes Scott, Oglethorpe, University of Ga., Spellman, Morehouse, Morris Brown) either have their own groups or have close lines of communication with each other. There is a wide range of views and opinions in the group, thus adding a bit of spice. There is also a full-time staff worker with the group.

Some activities planned for the future include:
1. Continuation of most of the above activities as the way opens.
2. Conduct an "operation dialogue" project similar to the

Donville, Va. project. This would be aimed at the more or less well to do white people. It will involve training programs for the participants. The present situation would be reviewed and answers to "typical" questions would be thought out. If possible a fact sheet on Atlanta will be prepared and used. Groups of 2 or 3 students would then go door to door in a few selected neighborhoods and attempt to talk with the residents there about the problem. The program would be primarily educational in nature, but may also draw some people into active participation in the movement.

3. A March through Georgia (or perhaps through the South). This would be very symbolic and significant if a group of predominately white students initiated an action of this sort. Serious talk and thought have been given this project by GSHR, and it should be followed through.

4. For the less action minded students, a survey of facilities could be made throughout the city. This would bring up-to-date the lists at the Human Relations Council of other civil rights groups who at present do not have time to do this among the myriad of other things that also need to be done.

5. Since the civil rights issue is uppermost in Atlanta now, projects in the slum areas are important. As the oppressed people begin to gain their rights they must also develop the responsitility to deal with them. This requires an education program and community program in the field of literacy, hygiene, community spirit, and physical improvement of the areas. This could be done on a workcamp basis at first, with the possible development of community centers. (Groups of 15-20 students could meet of Friday night and have an orientation session during which the area situation, etc. would be discussed. Saturday would be spent in working with the people in their homes or neighborhoods. An evaluation of the program would be conducted Sunday morning. Projects of this sort are needed in both the white and Negro slums. Of course the groups would be integrated.

6. Opportunities for organizing the unemployed are as yet unknown. However, much ground work would have to be done first. The workcamps (and eventually, the community centers) mentioned above would be a large part of this ground work.

7. Through the above action project the self-confidence of the students must be built up. For many of them this is new and at present they are not willing to risk suspension or expulsion from school. This indeed limits their activities. This is because as yet it is still not truely THEIR movement. This way of thinking must be developed. Actions by the administrations to attempt to quell the students can be used as rallying points for mass student protest.

8. In order to make inroads into the white community, the community contacts already established must be enlarged and maintained. At present they are giving logistic and moral support. In times of crisis they can be an effective voice of protest.

9. An exchange program with Tuskegee Institute and Ga. Tech is in the thought stage at present. This could be put into effect next year.

NEEDS

At present there is one staff worker with the GSHR. Two more people could be used. At least one should be southern and at least one should have a car. The GSHR is branching out to campuses all over the state of Georgia and the possibilities of coordinated action is great. However, this would involve at least one worker who could travel around to the campuses to coordinate the activities. Also if a large movement is started in a community it is very helpful if not necessary to have one person stay there for quite a while to make sure the "show stays on the road". Also there is the point that students are pressed for time and a full time person is needed to take some of this load. There is tremendous worth in the personal relations built up between the staff and the students. This can not be effectively done with a travelling person. The group tends to do nothing until the staff member is in town, which may be seldom and for short periods.

It is important to have staff workers this summer on the campuses in order to make the group and its actions continuous and thus avoiding the complete reorganization or refounding of the group in the Fall. The ground work laid during the year may be utilized for extensive work and action during the summer.