

SOUTHERN STUDENT ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

"We as young Southerners, hereby pledge to take our stand now to work for a new order, a New South, a place which embodies our ideals for all the world to emulate, not ridicule. We find our destiny as individuals in the South in our hopes and our work together as brothers."

Nashville, Tennessee
April, 1964

Contents

- I. Officers and Staff
- II. Statement of Goals and Programming
- III. By-Laws
- IV. Budget
- V. Report on Spring Conference
- VI. Mississippi Report
- VII. Christmas Project Report
- VIII. Report on Fall Conference
- IX. Early History of SSOC
- X. Newsletter

OFFICERS AND STAFF

Officers

Chairman: Howard Romaine, University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia

Vice-Chairman: Howard Spencer, Rust College
Holly Springs, Mississippi

Secretary: Herman Carter, Southern University
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Treasurer: Roy Money, Vanderbilt University
Nashville, Tennessee

Staff

Executive Director: Sue Thrasher

Field Secretary: Kathy Barrett
Ed Hamlett
Gene Guerrero, Jr.

STATEMENT OF GOALS AND PROGRAMMING: SSOC -- Spring Conference 1965

The last five years of southern history has stripped the "southern way of life" of its magnolia blossoms and southern belles. Mythical racial harmony has been replaced by fire hoses, cattle prods, and police dogs, and the illusion of comfortable plantation living is slowly fading in view of sharecropper shacks and the poverty stricken homes of coal miners in Eastern Kentucky and Tennessee. The decaying system of segregation has helped to clarify other social and economic problems of the South, so that today we are living in a region where there is an obvious need for broad secular changes if the "New South" is to be a well balanced and just society where all of its citizens have the opportunity to grow and live in freedom.

The technological revolution followed closely by the Negro revolt has projected the South into 20th century America. We have a choice of meeting and dealing with the problems of a new era, or retreating into traditionalism and struggling vainly for a way of life that was always more myth than reality.

As students living in this generation, and believing in the dignity of all mankind, we affirm our belief in a new South that will bring democracy and justice to all of its people. The freedom movement for an end to segregation inspires us to make our voices heard for a beginning of a true democracy in the South. The South that we would work for must be free of racial prejudice, of poverty and deprivation, manipulation by vested interests, and the tensions that come from the threat of nuclear war.

SSOC emerged in response to the need for a Southwide interracial, intercollegiate group. The goals that we would work for are:

1. Accomplishment of a completely integrated society, and the rise of full and equal opportunity for all.
2. An end to personal poverty and deprivation.
3. An end to "public poverty" which leaves us without decent housing, schools, parks, medical care, and communities.
4. A democratic society where politics poses a meaningful dialogue, and where each man has a voice in the decisions that affect men's lives.
5. A world working toward the easing of the tensions of the Cold War with positive emphasis on peace and world-wide understanding.
6. An end to man's inhumanity to man.

In view of these stated goals SSOC will work to promote campus education and participation in there areas of social change.

Our program will be:

1. A campus traveler program to encourage local student groups to work on issues relevant to their campuses as well as to become a part of the broader movement for freedom in the South. It is hoped that we can eventually have one traveler for each state. The duties of the traveler are:

- a. Inform college students about activities on other Southern campuses.
- b. Assist students in evaluation of their local situations.
- c. Encourage student involvement in issues relevant to the local situation.
- d. Assist students in the implementation of their own local programs.

2. A newsletter to act as the central channel of communication among the student groups. It will publish reports on the various types of activities of local action groups on southern campuses. In addition, the newsletter will try to encourage discussion of issues relevant to the building of a new and just order in the South.

3. Initiate programs and help local campus groups and advise SSOC contacts of opportunities to participate in projects in areas of poverty, desegregation, university reform, capital punishment, peace, labor unions, academic freedom, and unemployment.

4. Conferences--state, regional, and southwide, to kindle interest and participation in the issues which confront the South, the nation, and the world.

SOUTHERN STUDENT ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

(ADOPTED BY THE SPRING CONFERENCE, 1965)

Article I. Name

This organization shall be known as the Southern Student Organizing Committee, Inc., and shall be abbreviated as SSOC.

Article II. Purpose

This organization was founded and exists to engage in education, and communication activities on the issues facing the South, the nation, and the world today. These activities will be directed towards stimulation student participation in working for:

1. Accomplishment of a completely integrated society, and the rise of full and equal opportunity for all.
2. An end to personal poverty and deprivation.
3. An end to "public poverty" which leaves us without decent housing, schools, parks, medical care, and communities.
4. A democratic society where politics poses a meaningful dialogue, and where each man has a voice in the decisions that affect men's lives.
5. A world working toward the easing of the tensions of the Cold War with positive emphasis on peace and world-wide understanding.
6. An end to man's inhumanity to man.

Article III. Affiliation

Section 1. Local student groups adhering to the purpose of SSOC may be affiliated by the executive committee. In order to apply for affiliation a local group must have at least five members and must have been meeting regularly for one month. Written application must be accompanied by a five dollar non-refundable application fee.

Section 2. Each affiliate group must be engaged in activity consistent with the purposes of SSOC.

Section 3. Affiliation with SSOC shall in no way detract from the autonomy of the local affiliate.

Article IV. Disaffiliation

A local affiliate may be disaffiliated by the Executive Committee if the local group falls below five members or if it consistently takes action which falls outside the purpose of SSOC. Disaffiliation may be appealed to the coordinating committee whose decision is final.

Article V. Officers and Duties

Section 1. The officers of SSOC shall be: Chairman, Vice-chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer

2. by-laws

Section 2. Duties of the officers:

- a) Chairman: The Chairman shall preside at all coordinating and executive committee meetings.
- b) Vice-Chairman: The Vice-Chairman shall preside in the absence of the Chairman and shall perform such other duties as may be delegated to him by the Chairman.
- c) Secretary: The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping records of all coordinating and executive committee meetings. The Secretary shall be responsible for the dissemination of coordinating and executive committee meeting minutes to all affiliated chapter officers.
- d) Treasurer: The Treasurer shall be responsible for handling all funds. He shall make regular reports to the executive committee and present a general report to the coordinating committee annually.

Article VI. Nominations and Elections

Section 1. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer, shall be elected by the coordination committee at its annual meeting in the Spring.

Section 2. Nominations shall be made by a nominating committee and by nominations from the floor.

Section 3. Elections shall be by secret ballot and by a majority of the votes cast.

Article VII. The Coordinating Committee

Section 1. The Coordinating Committee is the highest governing body of SSOC.

Section 2. The Coordinating Committee shall be composed of the officers of SSOC and one delegate from each affiliate group.

Section 3. The Coordinating Committee shall have at least one annual meeting to be held in the Spring.

Section 4. Voting delegates must be active members of the affiliate group for which they cast their vote.

Section 5. Delegates from campuses having no SSOC affiliate will be encouraged to attend Coordination Committee meetings, with voice, but no vote.

Article VIII. The Executive Committee

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall be the decision making body of SSOC between Coordination Committee meetings.

Section 2. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the officers of SSOC, two representatives from each of the eleven Old South states, plus Kentucky and West Virginia. In addition, six members of the staff shall sit on the Executive Committee, with one vote each.

3. by-laws

Section 3. The representatives shall be elected by caucuses of delegates from each state, during the Spring Coordinating Committee meeting.

Section 4. Sixteen shall constitute a quorum.

Section 5. Notice of Executive Committee meetings shall be given two weeks prior to said meeting.

Article IX. Advisory Committee

Section 1. The Advisory Committee shall consist of individuals who will lend their prestige, advice, and influence to promote the growth and welfare of SSOC.

Section 2. Membership shall be conferred by the Coordination Committee. Members of the Advisory Committee shall serve for two years.

Section 3. The Advisory Committee shall meet once per year, with at least four state representatives to the Executive Committee, officers and members of staff.

Article X. Staff

Section 1. The staff shall consist of all persons working full time for SSOC, and receiving a salary from SSOC.

Section 2. The Executive Committee shall appoint an Executive Director who shall serve at its pleasure, and who shall be the chief executive officer of SSOC, and be responsible for direction and coordination of its programs.

Section 3. All other staff shall be appointed by the Executive Committee.

Article XI. Amendments

These by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of those present at a meeting of the Coordinating Committee. Such amendment(s) must be submitted in writing to members of the Coordinating Committee prior to said meeting.

BUDGET FOR 1965-66

Executive Director

Salary	2000		
Travel	600		
		Total	2,600

Office Expenses

Rent	1200		
Office Equipment	400		
Supplies	500		
Telephone	1200		
Secretary	2000		
		Total	5,300

Campus Traveler Program

Salaries (six)	4500		
Travel	9000		
		Total	13,500

Newsletter

Phone	215		
Paper	700		
Ink, staples	100		
Postage	360		
Assembly, handling	225		
		Total	1,600

Conferences

Regional (four)	7000		
Southwide	3000		
		Total	10,000

Distribution of Educational Materials
(Printing, reprinting, mailing)

Total	500
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Miscellaneous

Total	200
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Grand Total	\$33,700
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REPORT ON SPRING CONFERENCE

SOUTHERN STUDENT ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

The spring conference of the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) was held March 19-21 at the Old Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Leslie Dunbar, Executive Director of the Southern Regional Council, delivered the keynote address to the conference on Friday evening. Mr. Stokeley Carmichael, Field Secretary of the Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) addressed the conference body on Saturday evening. Other conference speakers included Steve Weissman of the Free Speech Movement, University of California, Mr. Ed Richer, faculty advisor to the Freedom Party at the University of Florida, and Mr. Richard Ramsey, College Director of the American Friends Service Committee in High Point, North Carolina.

Following the keynote address on Friday evening, there was a session devoted to local campus programming. Dr. Matthew Jones talked about the development of the campus political party (Freedom Party) at the University of Florida; Joseph Smith, President of Georgia Students for Human Rights, and William Roberts of the South Carolina Student Council on Human Relations discussed the organizing of student groups on a statewide level. Phil Smith, Knoxville Education Project, and Keith Burchett, University of Kentucky, discussed the committee structure in carrying out local programs.

Saturday afternoon was spent in six workshops: Implementation of the Civil Rights Bill, Poverty, Peace, University Reform, Labor Unions, and Tutorials. Workshop leaders were Norman Hill of the AFL-CIO, Jesse Morris, Director of Federal Programs for the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), William Jeffries, American Friends Service Committee, Paul Booth, Peace Research Education Project of Students for a Democratic Society, Mr. Jerry Levine, Chemical Workers Union, and Michael Lawler, US National Student Association. Other resource persons included Richard Ramsey, American Friends Service Committee, Conrad Browne, Highlander Center, Steve Weissman, Free Speech Movement, Walter Tillow, Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee, Al Ulmer, Southern Regional Council, and James Mayes, National Sharecroppers Fund.

The Coordinating Committee composed of one delegate from each campus group met throughout the afternoon on Saturday to draw up the official conference document which was read and passed by the conference body on Sunday morning. The statement said in part, "As students living in this generation and believing in the dignity of all mankind, we affirm our belief in a new South that will bring democracy and justice to all its people."

Other business included adoption of by-laws and the election of officers for 1965-66. The newly elected officers are: Chairman, Howard Romaine, University of Virginia; Vice-Chairman, Howard Spencer, Rust College; Secretary, Herman Carter, Southern University; and Treasurer, Roy Money, Vanderbilt University. The conference body also voted to endorse the March on Washington to End the War in Viet Nam, April 17.

A newly elected Executive Committee consisting of two persons from each state met immediately following the last conference session on Sunday morning to discuss the plans for specific programs for the summer and fall.

MISSISSIPPI REPORT

A statewide conference, sponsored by the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) was held in Mississippi at Tougaloo College, March 6, 1965. The purpose of the conference was to bring Negro and white students together to discuss the problems that confront this deep southern state.

D. Gorton, serving as temporary Field Secretary for the SSOC, traveled the state throughout the month of February visiting college campuses. D. Talked with students at the University of Mississippi, Mississippi Southern University, Rust College, Mississippi Mechanical & Industrial, Delta State College, Tougaloo College, Mississippi State College for Women, Mississippi College, Millsaps College, Jackson State College, and Belhaven. Students from Rust, Tougaloo, Millsaps and Mississippi College attended the one day conference.

Rev. Edwin King, Chaplain and Dean of Students at Tougaloo College, keynoted the conference with an informal talk about recent happenings within the state and the possibility for future courses of action. Howard Spencer, a student at Rust College, then presented a paper on the Church and Race. Howard's paper was followed by group discussion among the participants. In the late afternoon session, Martin Nicolas, Director of the Jackson COFO Community Center, presented a position paper on the war in Viet Nam. This paper prompted much discussion in the group at large and in small discussion groups.

Resource persons for the conference were Bob McNamara, Radio Free Tougaloo; Francis Mitchell, Council of Federated Organizations; Martin Nicholas, Council of Federated Organizations; Howard Spencer, Rust College; and the Rev. Edwin King, Tougaloo College.

The play "In White America" was presented to the conference participants on Saturday night by the Tougaloo Players.

This conference was only a beginning of the possibilities that are now opening within the state. The presence of five students from Mississippi College is an indication of the willingness to "hear and listen" that is slowly being expressed by Mississippi students. The students were also anxious to discuss problems other than those of a segregated society. This was evidenced in the discussion concerning war in Viet Nam.

The state of Mississippi does not allow for a free exchange of ideas. Some students feel threatened and intimidated by their parents, their school administration, and often, their peer group. A society that has so long been closed will not easily open. Other conferences where students can engage in honest and creative dialogue need to be held within the state -- or the closed society will perpetuate itself.

SSOC SPONSORS CHRISTMAS PROJECT IN MISSISSIPPI

Thirty-eight volunteers from seventeen southern colleges and universities participated in the SSOC-sponsored Christmas project in Mississippi. Volunteers worked in Hattiesburg and Meridian painting and remodeling community centers and participatingⁱⁿ/voter registration drives. Both projects were sponsored in cooperation with the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO). The project was divided into two four-day periods, one before and one after Christmas. An orientation session for all participants was held in Hattiesburg before each session.

The project in Hattiesburg consisted of remodeling the Dewey Street Community Center, a house currently being used for group activities and Freedom Schools, and Palmer's Crossing Community Center, a rural center on the outskirts of the city. Volunteers in the second session were also able to work with the voter registration team in preparing for the congressional challenge of the Freedom Democratic Party. Workers in Meridian repainted the community center and worked in voter canvassing.

Seminar sessions were arranged for the evenings. Resource persons from the local Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP); a prominent lawyer from New Orleans, Mr. Jack Nelson; Rev. Robert Beach of the National Council of Churches Minister's Project; and COFO staff members aided in these sessions.

For students who have been reared in conservative or segregated environments the experience of working in the Negro community brought many new insights. Joe Melton, a student from Vanderbilt University said, "The SSOC Christmas project provided tremendous opportunity for SSOC and the individuals involved to come into direct contact with the tensions and pressures which pervade the civil rights community in Mississippi. In my opinion, the project was more meaningful to the persons who went to Mississippi than it was to the COFO projects. We very probably did little of a significant nature for the projects, but the personal contact which we had with the Negro community as well as the really meaningful contact some of us had with the liberal whites kindles in us a new realization of the necessity for commitment on our part to the democratic tradition which is as much the heritage of these people as ourselves. We were involved in grass roots democracy at its elementary level, and in a real dialogue with the people of Mississippi. The realization of this came as a terrifically significant revelation and brought us a new understanding of, and commitment to, our responsibility for the future of these

people, the South, the nation, and ourselves.

Students from the following schools participated in the project: University of Florida, University of Virginia, Xavier University, Mary Washington College, Williams College, Auburn University, University of South Carolina, Vanderbilt University, Western Kentucky State College, Bellarmine College, Goucher College, Duke University, Florida State University, Loyola University of New Orleans, University of the South, Emory University, and the University of Southern Louisiana.

Only one incident occurred throughout the project. Ed Hamlett, a white participant from Tennessee was beaten by a Hattiesburg hardware store owner when he and two Negro students attempted to purchase supplies for the community center.

Similar projects are planned for the Easter holidays.

REPORT ON SOUTHWIDE FALL CONFERENCE
THE SOUTHERN STUDENT ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
Old Gammon Seminary campus, November 13-15, 1964

The first southwide fall conference of the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC) was held in Atlanta, Georgia, November 13-15 at the old Gammon Seminary campus. Approximately 144 students representing 43 schools and eleven southern states were present.

The conference began on Friday night, with Ron Parker, treasurer of SSOC, talking about the organization of SSOC and how it could relate to local campus groups. General discussion followed concerning the role of local campus groups in their college community. Ideas were exchanged as to successful programming for local areas. After the first evening session a film on the life story of Lillian Smith was shown and a record of readings from her new book was played.

Regular sessions began on Saturday morning, the first one dealing with Students in Politics. Larry Goodwyn, former head of the Texas Democratic Coalition talked about the need for coalition politics, citing examples of how the coalition has successfully worked in Texas. Ed King, national committeeman for the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party gave the history of the FDP, the convention challenge, and expansion of the party into other deep south areas. Immediately following the morning session a workshop was scheduled to give students a chance to discuss local campus programming.

Don West, Department of Education, University of Maryland, began the afternoon session on Southern History and Economy. Immediately following Mr. West, Robert Van Waes, Staff Associate of the American Association of University Professors spoke on the academic freedom of students. Rev. C. T. Vivian, Director of Affiliates of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference then spoke on civil liberties and violations of constitutional rights. The afternoon session was also followed by a workshop.

Ed Hamlett, a member of the SSOC Executive Committee and director of the white student project of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), began the evening session by discussing the relationship between SSOC and the SNCC. General discussion followed concerning the "whiteness" of SSOC and the possibility of attempting to work on both white and Negro campuses. It was pointed out by some of the people present who are on the SNCC staff that SNCC is beginning to reconsider its base of operation and is moving in the direction of community organizing. Therefore the door is now open for SSOC to expand its emphasis to include all Southern campuses. (Originally SSOC was conceived as being an effort to reach white southern students. The need for working on Negro college campuses had not been felt so keenly since SNCC was considered working with such groups.) The group decided that SSOC should become an inter-racial, inter-collegiate organization. The meeting was then adjourned with the understanding that persons interested in continuing the discussion could meet in another room and those interested in seeing some of the films available could do so.

The business session continued on Sunday morning. The emblem appearing on the SSOC newsletter which had also been made into buttons was discussed at length. It was decided by the group that the black and white clasped hand over the Confederate flag should not be considered the SSOC emblem.

The Rev. J. Metz Rollins of the Presbyterian Commission on Religion and Race then spoke briefly on the role of the church in social change. He was followed by James Forman, the Executive Secretary of the SNCC, who spoke on the revolution in the campus and the community.

Immediately following the last session one person from each campus represented met to elect an Executive Committee. Each state represented elected one person to an Executive Committee whose specific task is to plan another Southwide conference tentatively set for February. The second conference is planned to be more representative in terms of predominately white and predominantly Negro campuses. One major fault of the conference was an insufficient amount of time devoted to workshops and discussion of local campus programming. It is hoped that the next conference can focus more on these needs.

The success of the SSOC conference cannot be gauged. In terms of the original purpose of SSOC, which was to involve more white southern college students in social action, a significant degree of success was accomplished. (About 125 white students from southern colleges were present.) In terms of future possibilities the idea of expansion into a broad based student group working on both white and Negro campuses is exciting. With much of the thrust of the civil rights movement in the South being directed at community organizing there is an obvious need for campus organizing to help staff community projects as well as campus projects. There is also a need for students to participate in a wider range of activities such as university reform, academic freedom, political action, poverty programs, unemployment, etc. Perhaps the greatest value of the conference lies in the fact that it did serve to broaden our vision of the task that lies before us.