

THE DISTRICT ONE PROJECT

began this summer at Columbus, after the groundwork had been laid by a few of the Cofe staff. Quite a few volunteers came here to receive further training for the ~~Matches~~ project, which didn't materialize. This shift of plans, plus the fact that a new house had to be found the 2nd week in July after police harrassment, slowed up the project. Many causes probably are responsible for the lack of spectacular success. Prominent among them is sophisticated tradition of social control in this general area, which knows that it is best not to produce news-worthy arrests. There seems to be long practice in intimidating Negroes family by family.

M.S. Mississippi has been represented to us as the most highly industrialized area of the state; employment is comparatively plentiful. Employers in such a place want peace and quiet at any price: this may account partly for the good control of violent segregationalists. In the Negro community we find that many people wish not to lose the little that they have, and therefore have pulled their young people back from the project.

Encountering this atmosphere in Columbus, the project has spread north, with resident groups doing Freedom Party registration in West Point, Aberdeen and Tupelo. In addition, there is a Freedom School at West Point. The response has been more gratifying in these places than in Columbus. West Point had a school in which to hold the school almost immediately; one was acquired in Columbus only on July 28th. West Point also had a rousing rally on July 22nd. (However, a bit of a reaction is now setting in here.)

Here are some statistics:

	N	W	M	F
Veterans of the Federated Organizations	10	9	1	7
Other "Adults"	5	4		4
"Volunteer students"	13	3	10	10
Local students	5	5	xx	5
	32			

The numbers of ~~xxx~~ resident workers in the centers are as follows:

	Administration	Teaching	Registration	Law	Total
Columbus	3	4	4	2	14
West Point	1	3	4		8
Aberdeen		2	3		5
Tupelo			3		3
Starkville			4		4
	32				

I shall spend some time on Starkville because it is a personal experience. A small but insistent delegation (at first one of each ethnic group, now three Negro and one white) started work there on July 19th, driven there by Valencourt and Weber. I have taken the volunteers there about half of the trips and have had the experience of being lectured for hours by the police chief, Thomas Josey.

Mr. Josey is, according to his lights, a just man; the Negro community pretty much agrees with him. He is paternal-

istic towards the Negroes and has protected our workers from possible white council assaults. When we first encountered him, any mention of social change made him explode. Repeated talks with our workers, our lawyers, & the F.B.I. have quieted him considerably. At the precinct meeting on July 28th the police watched, through a picture-window and under a bright light, this valiant first step of citizens towards democracy. The only police action was to take notice of every person attending the meeting and to display their dogs.

Dr. Charles Leslie, anthropologist from Pomona College, makes an interesting comment on the project. Of all the similar groups of which he has been a part: labour unions, anthropological expeditions, the air force, etc, he finds that this one works together most harmoniously and gets the most done.

This facility was shown at the staff meeting of the whole district on July 29th, in the steady, tense way it laid out a fairly complicated plan to concentrate most workers in a different community through a 5 day period, to increase freedom registration before the Democratic Convention; They also began the discussion of the kind of Freedom Days they may hold in the district.

My personal report

Roy V. Mancourt functioned in this district as a volunteer minister, i.e. he "explained the students' actions and motives to white ministers and attempted to establish communication in good faith between white and Negro communities.

Considering the shortness of my stay, it seemed best for me to function as a "minister-counsellor" - "to be with the students on a 24-hour basis."

Since the project is scattered in five communities, the N3C car has been invaluable in keeping in touch with the students. I have already mentioned the Starkville effort, which involved sharing a certain amount of risk with one group. There was also one circuit of the three northern groups with our project director. Another trip began with dropping a student in Aberdeen, calling on Episcopal clergy there and at Okalona College, and ended bringing some of the teaching staff back from West Point.

There has been a great amount of fetching and carrying - from going to the rally at West Point to meeting the Jackson bus. They were all opportunities to be with the students, and appear to be worthwhile. At least the students and staff have been grateful.