

Weekly Report: Friday, October 16 through Sunday, October 25 [1964]
Submitted by Richard Jewett, Mississippi CORE staff

This report covers a ten day period in order to get on a calendar week basis. I returned to Mississippi on Thursday, October 15, after spending something over two weeks moving out of my apartment in New York, arranging to store some items and bringing others here to Miss.

Daily breakdown of the use of the week:

Friday, October 16	4th Congressional District staff meeting in Meridian.
Saturday	Discussion with people in the Jackson office
Sunday, October 18	Mileston Community Center opening; abortive project directors' meeting in Mileston
Monday	More discussion with people in Jackson
Tuesday	Jackson office staff meeting
Wednesday	Sick in bed
Thursday	Paper work on personnel and cars
Friday	Meeting with Moses, Morris, and Dennis; Canton meeting; Meeting with COFO counsel, Aronson
Saturday	Begin list of COFO problems
Sunday	Complete COFO problem list; write weekly report

It was evident as the summer came to a close that COFO was a markedly different organization than it was when the summer began. But only now has the difference become obvious enough to raise questions in the minds of everyone working with COFO. There simply aren't guidelines in COFO to deal with many problems that have arisen.

The more immediate problems are:

What is the Freedom Vote? How is it to be run? Who makes decisions about it? What will the staff do when the Freedom Vote is over? How does the community center and freedom school tie in with the Freedom Vote? These immediate problems are in local project hands and are dealt with on a day to day basis as they come up.

The long range problems are something else again. There are many in number and cover virtually all aspects of COFO. This week was spent trying to find some sort of suggested pattern for COFO's future; the pattern turned out to be simply a listing of unanswered questions that COFO must try to deal with before it can proceed or as it proceeds. This listing of problems is included as a part of this report.

The 4th District staff response to COFO's future has been good. Rather than develop frustration over unanswered questions there has been a willingness to talk about what COFO might do to overcome the problems. Both at the Meridian and at the Canton meetings there was a good discussion of deeper problems; the usual car-money problems took only a small part of the meetings. The Meridian meeting was wide-ranging; the Canton meeting was limited almost exclusively to the Freedom Vote

Evidently the summer and the two months this fall have served as a shake-down. By now almost everyone knows his relationship to everyone else. There is not the strong ingrown staff battling that sometimes is in evidence; rather there is a sense of working and of seeing that working time is well-spent.

The position of COFO staff counsel is taking shape. At first there seemed to be great difficulty--evidently largely a personality problem. But that may be working itself out. The office is at least off the ground, and the power and strength of the office is more and more evident with the passage of time. At the same time the office shows great promise of bringing more legal voice directly to the field; the distance between staff and legal matters may gradually be cut way down. It seems a great improvement over any other civil rights legal set-up I know.

A large problem has arisen in Jackson of having too many people in the office who are not COFO workers. Things disappearing, some small fights breaking out, a lot of bad talk. No real mechanism exists to handle the problem. It seems to be getting better just because it got so bad, but our inability to handle it shows (typically, I guess) how one finds it hard to know when to deal with what problems when one is taking on all of society $\frac{1}{2}$ at once. A good part of the Jackson office staff meeting was taken up with the problem. The latter half of the meeting was a discussion of decision-making, a review of the problems of the summer, and a discussion of some alternatives for the future.

I might add in closing that the community center in Mileston is an immensely impressive physical structure. Inside one forgets that one is in rural Mississippi; it's that good. Now only time will tell whether or not the building can really serve as an active freedom center.