

Weekly Report- October 11-18, 1964

In the beginning of week I reviewed the Poverty Bill and MDTA

for possible programs for local communities like Canton to sponsor. After a review of these types of programs it is my personal feeling that little can be done directly through the community and the federal agencies like sponsoring these programs. All of these except for the possibility of rural libraries and other small ones not involving major economic development are set up to go through the local administration of the unemployment agencies. I am writing letters now to the central agencies asking their advice on how to move more directly through the community, and for statistical information about area redevelopment, but I honestly feel that what has to be done is to put heavy pressure on the local offices so that they are ready to, if not initiate such action, at least be receptive to having such programs set up. As to the mechanics of the program, I do not think it is feasible for any of us to work out an entire program to submit to the authorities, mostly because we do not have qualified people to do this. Our job is to put pressure on local agencies to cooperate with federal men, and federal men to come down and help us plan this competently. (This is all in regard to economic development, involving cooperation from industry, banking, and the agencies).

As to how to apply this pressure, I have a few ideas. One is to organize a large scale welfare type organization staffed by local people, and administered through the political organization of the fdp. using the blocks aw units, I would like to train a staff of about 10 people in the basics of the social security act, disability provisions, and unemployment laws, plus welfare programs like aid to dependent children and old age assistance. They could go around to all the families in the negro community and not only get basic statistical information about the economic structure of the community, but also advise the people what programs they were eligible for, and help them apply and appeal denials. If we do not win our just appeals, we have a legal leverage in Washington, etc, and at the least, one more clear cut case to work with through the courts and government. but aside from the legal aspects, and the increased advantages to the families who do gain more aid, I think a flooding of local aid offices with negro applications would scare these people considerably with the prospect of having to support the negro community financially, and get them to be more willing to cooperate with programs designed to make the people more self sufficient. It would be a comparatively easy thing to see that there is not too much discrimination in the administration of this program once it was set up through the proper channels.

The second advantage to this program is to continue to utilize the political apparatus of the fdp in order to strengthen it as a functioning thing, and to attract more people to it. programs like this proposed welfare one should not be done in the name of the fdp, but by its members. in this way the community would associate the work with the fdp, but legally and in the eyes of the federal agencies it could not be termed a political maneuver.

At the moment I am getting in affidavits on violations of voting rights in American Tent, and discrimination in the administration of welfare. Actually, all this activity has been suspended and will be suspended until after nov. 3, in favor of building up the fdp in canton. I don't think I have to go into what that means in actual daily activities. I feel this is not in conflict with federal programs because the future work I plan to do with federal programs will be done with this organization we are building now.

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