

EP. 13

Memorandum on the Structure of The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee by James Forman

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this paper is to set forth some of my ideas on the question of structure. It will try to take into account many of the ideas raised by people from time to time. Some of these ideas are: How do you broaden the decision making process of the organization and what plans can be submitted for broadening the implementation of decisions made by the body? Some staff also say to us that we must try to educate ourselves and try to give those people who donot normally have administrative and committee responsibilities some function in the organization.

Before I do this, however, I would like to say that whatever structure is set up will have to be changed at some future time because the goals and programs of the organization will change and this will require some new structure for implementation. Also I think it is very important that we do not forget or that we remind ourselves that this is a long term struggle. We will always have some problems before us and that each time we engage in some new action that will create some new problem.

THE STRUCTURE:

I suggest the Coordinating Committee which will be the entire staff and those people which the call committee invite should meet three times a year. At these meetings it should discuss problems and programs. The basic policy making body should be this body and it should vote upon programs.that it wishes the organization to do in the periods of time when it is not meeting. For instance, the people here assembled or those present at this meeting should vote on whether or not it wishes to extend the Freedom Schools into other projects. It should discuss the merits of the Federal Programs and the Freedom Democratic Party----to see if these should also be extended. Now if we do this, for instance, then it is necessary for the body to set up some structure for the implementation of this program across the south. The Coordinating Committee should elect an Executive Committee. The form of this election will vary from what is usually the form of elections. For instance I am proposing that elections take place within a circle of people who will work together on a series of programs in various areas. This will become more clear when the structure of the Executive Committee is presented. Also the Coordinating Committee should have certain Committees directly responsible to it. They are:

- A. Personnel and Office Committee
- B. Education Committee
- C. Call Committee
- D. Freedom School Committee
- E. Community Centers Committee
- F. Federal Programs Committee
- G. Political Action Committee

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STRUCTURE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. All state project directors should be on the Executive Committee. The State project directors should be elected by an assembly of all the staff assigned to work in a particular state. If there is a state where there are not more than ten people working, then the Executive Committee should appoint that project director. (there is some concern on this proposal. I have shown a draft of this proposal to many people asking for ideas. Some say that if the project director was elected by the staff this might lead to a lot of politicking and that maybe better people may not get elected. There were other reasons. I am presenting the alternative proposal of having the State Project Directors appointed by the Executive Committee.)

B. Each state should have so many votes at large. These votes will be determined by the number of people who are working in Congressional districts. If in a state we are working in two Congressional districts with five or more staff people in each Congressional district, then those state field staff should elect 2 people at large to the Executive Committee. If we are working, as we are in Mississippi in five Congressional districts then there should be five votes at large from the state of

Mississippi. In Arkansas there would be currently one vote at large and if that program expands into two Congressional districts with five or more staff in each district, then they would have two at large. In a state where there is not five people in a Congressional district, then there would only be the project director represented on the Executive Committee.

Categories

C. The Chairmen of all standing Committees of the Coordinating Committee would be elected to the Executive Committee. The Chairman of these committees would be selected by the people working on these committees. Selection to these committees could be on the basis of those interested in working on the committees and suggestions from the floor.

D. Five delegates from the entire body should be selected. This election would come after all other elections have taken place.

The Executive Committee would have to elect or appoint a Planning Committee and a Finance Committee. Both of these Committees would be responsible to report at the session of the Coordinating Committee, but the detail nature of their work sort of makes it imperative that they come from the smaller body. The Finance Committee should and must report broad categories of expected budget items, how this money will be raised. The Coordinating Committee itself should approve a yearly budget and must have reports on the state of the budget.

FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEES OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

A. The Personnel and Office Committee will be responsible for the recommending of hiring people to the Executive Committee and the review of how the offices of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee are functioning. The details of how this committee will work and where it will meet should be left out of this paper but could be discussed by those wanting to work on it and brought back to the body or to the Executive Committee.

B. The Education Committee: This needs working out in more details but I think we all know what we are talking about.

C. The Call Committee: This deals with who is invited to the meetings of the Coordinating Committee. Also the Call Committee is responsible for the preparation of an agenda. It does this in consultation with the Executive Committee. The Call Committee is responsible for the orderly working of all meetings of the Coordinating Committee. The Chairman of this committee is responsible to see that staff and other invitees of the Coordinating Committee get copies of the meetings of the Executive and Coordinating Committee.

D,E,&F: These Committees are self-explanatory. But the Political Action Committee deals with the various political programs that the sections of the organization will be working on.

The people here assembled should examine the role of the Chairman and the Executive Secretary, determine how they should be elected, and some general guidelines as to their roles.

Now I want to present a plan for the Administration. The Executive Secretary should be asked by the body to be the overall administrative officer of the organization. He should have the right to select people who will assist in the administration subject to the approval of the Executive Committee. I suggest the following people be considered a part of the Administration: Executive Secretary, Administrative Assistant, Program Secretary whose role will be to travel in the field to examine how programs are carried out and to report to the Executive Secretary his findings and to the Executive Committee, the Administrator of the Jackson Office if this is a SNCC person, if not then SNCC must find a person who works in the Jackson office to serve as Administrative Assistant in Jackson; the Northern Coordinator, the Southern Campus Coordinator, the Director of Communications and the Research Director.