SNCC STAFF WORKSHOP
Selma, Alabama
December 13 - 16, 1963

Co-Directors: Worth Long & William Stafford

The purpose of this workshop was threefold: 1. Bring together workers from the field
to share and discuss common problems and tactics; 2. Begin to develop a perspective
which will help us in the future; and 3. Begin training fieldworkers in the tech-
niques of conducting workshops to be held in all protest areas of the South.

Myles Horton and Conrad Browne, from the Highlander Research and Education Center,
were present to set up the workshop and to serve as resource personnel. Following
a day's planning session, select SNCC staff members conducted most of the sessions,
and determined content and direction. Those attending were as follows:

Selma - Dallas County	SW Georgia	Atlanta	Highlander
Worth Long	Charles Sherrod	Ed Nakawatase	Myles Horton
Willie C. Robertson	John Washington	Billy Stafford	Conrad Browne
Wilson Brown	Willie Ricks	Cordell Reagon	
James Austin	David Bell		
Tom Brown	Randolph Battle		
Bennie Tucker (Rev.)	John Perdew		
	Phil Davis		
	Don Harris		
	Bob Mants		
	Bob Cover		
	Eddie Brown		

Certain basic areas of discussion were agreed upon, and discussion leaders were
appointed by the group.

1. How to conduct a workshop - Myles Horton
   Emphasis on group participation and discussion rather than one person lec-
   turing.

2. The history and current problems of the Selma Project - Worth Long

3. Leadership - Don Harris
   a. SNCC workers should be advisors, not leaders of a community.
   b. A SNCC worker's role is to give community people insight into civil rights
      and economic independence.
      1. Involve local people in decision-making.
      2. Give responsibility to other people.

4. The role of song in the movement - Cordell Reagon
   a. The experiences of the Freedom Singers on tour.
   b. Some of the traditional and new songs of the movement.
   c. Songs convey aims of the movement.

5. History of SNCC - Charles Sherrod
   a. Early discussions about whether to engage in direct action or voter regis-
      tration.
   b. The early commitment of SNCC workers to non-violence as a way of life, as
      opposed to its present use as a protest tactic.
   c. SNCC's gradual inheritance of the distrust and suspicion among the older
      civil rights groups.

6. Goals of SNCC - John Perdew
   a. Change the Negro's image of himself.
   b. Gain political power and representation through voting.
   c. Gain economic power through jobs.
   d. Change the structure of the society.

   Discussion followed between those who felt that the people must first be stirred
   up by demonstrations, picketing, etc., then moved in a particular direction; and
   those who felt that the political and economic program should be emphasized first.

7. A SNCC community program - Panel (Sherrod, Stafford, Perdew)
   Discussion of criteria of success in a community program.
        1. The accomplishing of the immediate stated goals of the program, or
        2. A change in the mental attitude of the Negroes to a "freedom attitude."
        3. Depends on what people want.

8. Decision making - Group discussion
   a. If SNCC gets too highly organized it will lose the spirit and spontaneity
      that has carried it this far.
   b. Field workers should decide what they need, rather than being directed from
      Atlanta.
   c. Priorities should be established to add objective, rational factors to de-
      cisions.

9. Community Organization - Myles Horton & Conrad Browne
   a. Institutions of a community - Old
        1. Economic - main base of community.
        2. Religious -- churches more influential in rural life.
        3. Political - workers in local, state, and federal government.
        4. Civic and Fraternal organizations.
   b. Institutions of a community - New
        1. Unions, cooperatives.
        2. Voter organizations - set up to shape politics.
   c. Relationship between the community institutions and SNCC.
        1. A few, if any, people can be depended upon for help with the SNCC pro-
           gram from old, established institutions.
        2. Attempts can be made to work with members from the newer institutions,
           even to the point of influencing their policies.
        3. Demand more work from existing institutions, and let them have the cre-
           dit for what is done, even if SNCC has worked hardest on a project.
        4. The most effective way to reach people is to have a prior relationship
           with them before asking them to do something.
        5. The majority of people are influenced by their institutional associations.
        6. Negro people who are dependent on whites are not immediately reachable.

10. SNCC workers - Don Harris & Worth Long
   a. Negroes as well as whites have problems as field workers. Both are faced
      with a forced, unnatural acceptance of people because SNCC workers are
      supposed to "like all people."
   b. Recruiting
        1. A SNCC worker must know who he is and what he hopes to do.
        2. He must be able to relate well to people of varied religions and race.
        3. Prospective personnel should be interviewed and tested in the field to
           determine how well they work with people.

c. Personnel problems
  1. Rapid turnover in leadership brings constant new leaders and new approaches to problems, which people have difficulty adjusting to.
  2. The leader must live with and like the people he influences.
  3. Recruitment of new personnel is needed.
d. SNCC workers must research and study the area in which they are working.
  1. Make contacts with all levels in the community.
  2. Know current protest techniques being used in other parts of the South.

11. Voter Registration - Discussion
  a. Keep taking people to the registrar even if they are not permitted to register.
    1. Just trying to register is a victory - Freedom Day in Selma.
    2. End the myth that Negroes don't want to vote.
  b. How to arouse support by the Negroes.
    Whites have discovered our program is based on reaction to crises created by white racists. They are now finding ways to hurt us without stirring up people, because they think that if there is no crisis, the Negro people will not support SNCC.
  c. Issue must be emotional and not logically argued, i.e. - the school bond issue: the argument that Negro money is being spent on white schools cannot move people who have little money anyway. Instead, the children should leave their school and go to the white school, demanding to see the labs, gym, etc.
  d. Negro candidate
    Negroes tend to be more exacting of their candidate than whites are of theirs.
  e. A Voter Registration Handbook - William Stafford
    1. Should include the following:
      a. Reasons why people won't register:
        1. fears, pressures from community institutions
        2. conflicts with other organizations
        3. white intimidation
      b. Obstacles encountered in registering:
        1. numbers system
        2. putting whites in front of line
        3. not notifying people when to take test
      c. Places to go for help:
        1. Justice Department
        2. FBI
        3. SNCC
        4. VEP
      d. How to find out about the community:
        1. key people
        2. ministers
        3. undertakers
        4. churches
        5. other institutions
      e. Specific techniques:
        1. canvassing
        2. holding mass meetings
        3. demonstrations
        4. workshops and citizenship schools
      f. Cards and questionaires:
        1. what they should include
        2. when they should be used

g. Community resources:
   1. how to use them
      a. high school students
      b. college students
      c. local leadership
      d. business men
h. How and when to run Negro candidates
i. How to develop and broaden leadership in the community
j. How to work in rural areas
k. What kinds of records should be kept and how to use them

12. Personal Contact - Group Discussion
a. Nothing creates as lasting an impression as one person talking to another. To the Negro, mass media represent white propaganda.
b. Look for the key persons in the communications centers of their area.
c. Call these together, explain what SNCC is doing, and ask help.
d. Approach people carefully with questionaires. They become suspicious.
e. Compile careful notes after leaving house, so people are not intimidated by note-taking during conversation.
f. White workers must live in the community they are trying to influence. This will ease suspicions of Negroes.
g. Different approach, dress, and manner is needed to reach different levels of the Negro community.