

TO: James Forman
and
The Executive Committee

FROM: Joyce Barrett

RE: Proposals for work with women's groups.

Women make up the largest, most highly organized segment of our society today. SNCC has not begun to tap the resources available in women's groups, in terms of money, publicity, and work-energy. I would like to propose the following projects aimed specifically at involving large numbers of women in meaningful support for SNCC. For practical reasons (not prejudice) these proposals concentrate on publicity and support for women in the movement.

POLICE BRUTALITY

Although an attack on police brutality will not directly effect the critical institutions that maintain segregation and the corrupt system (i.e., political disenfranchisement, totally inadequate education, and denial of fair economic participation), it can be used to raise many issues, provide new sources for publicity, and involve organizations that normally might not give support to the civil rights movement.

(1) Cattle Prods

As soon as the Civil Rights Bill is passed or failed, I would like to see an active campaign begun to stop the use of cattle prods on human beings. Reasons: a) Publicity, b) Provides a program through which I can become familiar with individuals and groups, and evaluate their potential support, c) initial involvement of previously non-supportive groups, which hopefully will become increasingly active.

There is a great deal that must be done in preparation for the campaign. We must decide if we want to press for Federal legislation outlawing the use of cattle prods on humans. In discussions about this, some people have pointed out that to seek a law would raise too many issues of Federal power vs. local police power - issues that we, as well as the federal government, may not be ready to deal with. However, I tend to feel that even if such a law were not passed, the process of debate and publicity would have tremendous educational value - in terms of exposing police state tactics. I would like some indication of opinion(s) from the Executive Committee.

At any rate, to prepare for the campaign, a whole spectrum of groups (including medical associations, mothers' groups,

religious, etc.) will be contacted who will begin to distribute and publicize our material on brutality (some of it is still being prepared by the Research Department). Local chapters will be asked to give priority to this .

I estimate that it would be September (or later) before we could see any real public awareness. Reasons: 1) the Research Department will be involved in work on the Dem. Convention until late August, 2) most organizations do not meet in the summer, 3) it will take that long for us to prepare the staffs of national organizations for their involvement in the attack, which be recognized publicly as coming from SNCC.

The second stage of the campaign would begin with the introduction of the Cattle Prod Bill. I believe it should not be introduced until we've laid the groundwork (brochures, speakers, press coverage) and feel public response.

(2) Mississippi Sterilization Bill

The Sterilization Bill will be publicized along with the cattle prod issue. We are already receiving requests for any material available. We must get affidavits from women who have been involuntarily sterilized, plus background information. Should the bill be passed, we will begin building pressure for its repeal, and make this a priority issue.

(3) Jail Visitations

Organizations will be asked to recruit women who would be available to travel on short notice into protest areas where there is a real problem of police brutality, or substandard conditions in the jails (such as there were in Americus). The team would visit the jails, take affidavits, pressure officials AND make a point of visiting the wives of any official practicing or encouraging brutality.

I am in the process of building a contact file of nationally known women who would participate in these teams, and who would be willing to make public statements or hold press conferences when necessary. There are groups now, who in my estimation would give ready support - such as the National Council of Negro Women, The National Council of Jewish Women, The National Council of Catholic Women, United Church Women, the YWCA, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

FUND RAISING

As we send women SNCC workers on speaking tours, there will, of course, be steady general fund raising. However, I think we should approach groups with specific requests for support of single phases of our work.

(1) Adopt a Worker

We will prepare an estimate of the total cost for SNCC to support a worker for a year, including subsistence, medical bills, travel, rent, food and clothing. Groups will be approached to give total support for one worker for one year. If they can't give that much, they will be asked to cover subsistence.

There will be several kinds of groups to ask for this kind of support. We will submit names of workers to groups they are already connected with. We will also ask organizations in individual cities to put together for the support of one worker, particularly when we have staff from that state or area. (Emma Bell is being supported by women in Washington, D.C.)

To make this successful, persons selected would write letters or reports on a regular basis, they would be sent to speak in that area, and the Atlanta office would make a point of sending any material about them (news releases, articles, etc.,) to local papers and the interested groups. Of course, should the person go to jail, there will be an already organized group who could be called on to raise bail, do publicity, write protest letters, etc.

(2) Education

Groups will be approached for scholarship money for women workers to get back into school.

(3) Financing Projects

We will submit proposals for total (or partial) support of citizenship schools, research projects, community centers, medical clinics, etc. For a more complete list, see the following - COMMUNITY CENTERS OR SERVICES.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

The following projects will be useful only if they address needs within the community. I cannot estimate these needs, and so must have proposals from project directors, which I will submit to organizations. I must have at least four copies of each proposal.

(1) Short Term Services

These projects will last no longer than two months. Teams of women will be brought into communities to provide needed professional services such as teaching, home economics and nutrition, legal help, social work, and medical help (including nurses, doctors, psychiatrists, opticians, and dentists), and librarians.

(2) Long Term Services

We will ask organizations, particularly professional groups, to recruit and support financially for a minimum of one year, and preferably two, such professional people as teachers who have specialized in remedial reading, counsellors, truant officers, social workers, public health specialists, nutritionists, nurses, doctors, etc. These people could work publicly with SNCC, or could be sent in to work with other organizations in the community not identified with SNCC. We should, however, be very specific about the kinds of services we need so that these people will be used effectively.

(3) Small Businesses or Home Industries

Where economic reprisals have cut off job supplies, groups would be asked to help set up small business ventures. They would help get equipment, publicize the venture, and try to provide customers. The quilting in Dawson, Ga., or the sewing company in Selma are examples.

(4) Bookmobiles

Groups would be asked to supply books, vehicle, maintenance costs.

(5) Career Counseling

We will ask well known women to come in teams to speak to young people about education and preparation for jobs. We will try to get women who would be likely to stimulate and inspire young people. (Constance Baker Motely, Lorraine Hansbury, Ruby Dee, Juanita Kidd Stout, Verda Welcome, Jeanne Noble, etc.)

PUBLICITY

General publicity will be done through speaking tours, the publications of groups with whom we work, and friendly women journalists. With speakers we will send photographic displays, affidavits, and the usual SNCC literature. I'm sure a number of organizations will be willing to send out printed material (supplied by us) to their complete mailinglist.

(1) Brochures

We must prepare brochures designed specifically for use with women's groups. Julian is already in the process of reprinting articles on Mrs. Boynton and Mrs. Hamer.

(2) Presenting an Image of SNCC Women

A few SNCC women will have constant publicity and will be sent to cover speaking engagements for key women's groups. This will be part of a deliberate attempt to make certain personalities well known with women across the country.

(3) Crisis Situations

As fairly well publicized demonstrations, jailings, brutality, occur, we should be quick to present the stories of individual women and children involved, to groups across the country, especially groups with which they are affiliated (religious, civic, alumnae associations, etc.).

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In the next two months I plan to go to Washington, Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, and the West Coast, to speak, attend conferences, and talk with individual women leaders. Some commitments have been made to raise money for my transportation, and I have had many indications of interest in our proposals.