

12/63

Change Intro to explain promise of Moses as to how we win it: to vote

p. 21

Outline for Maureen Murphy

1963 will be a year of all-out effort to organize the Negro communities of Mississippi. Through the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) the national civil rights organizations and local voter registration groups will continue a series of programs in politics and community problems to achieve effective organization through the mass of Negroes in this state. The long-range goal of organization is to put Negroes in a position to wield sufficient power to effect radical changes in the political and economic set-up of this state.

The first step in the COFO drive is a massive voter registration effort across the state from December 15, 1963 through February 29, 1964. The goal is 20,000 attempts to register despite anticipated harassment and intimidation by local officials and whites.

There are several purposes to the voter drive, as possible

1. To get as many Negroes in a position to vote next November.
2. It is our position that a large number of Negroes will not be permitted to register to vote in this state under present conditions. Negro applicants are subjects to both political and economic reprisals for trying to register. Therefore, the voter registration attempts will spotlight the inability of large numbers of Negroes to achieve the basic political right of voting.

3. To set the stage for a FREEDOM REGISTRATION campaign because Negroes are not permitted to register. In this campaign COFO will establish its own set of registration standards and keep its own books to show that, if permitted, Negroes would register to vote in large enough numbers to seriously threaten the all-white complexion of the political face of Mississippi.

The goal will be to register at least 25,000 Negroes on the Freedom book

4. To get the Federal Government to further recognize the contrast between the desire of Negroes in Mississippi to register and the state-led interference with their efforts to do so. It is hoped that the Voter Drive and the Freedom Registration Drive will increase the pressure on the Federal Government to fulfill its responsibilities to guarantee the right to vote. It is already clear that it has the power to do so if it wants to.

5. to build solid local organization in communities across the state in preparation for the campaigns Negro candidates will run this summer for the five Congressional seats and the Senatorial seat of Senator John Stennis.



The second step in the political program will be to launch petition drives to qualify Negro candidates for the Democratic and Republican primaries in June and as independents for the general elections in November. One thousand signatures of registered voters will be required to legally qualify as an independent candidate for Senator. Five hundred signatures to qualify for Congressional office. But here again, Negroes will be on the spot. Their names will have to go on a petition to be filed with the Secretary of State of Mississippi. Further, with fewer Negroes permitted to register than whites, it will be more difficult for prospective Negro candidates to obtain signatures than it would be for whites. This is especially true if several Negro want to file as independents. At present, there are approximately 20,000 Negroes eligible to vote in November.

It is reasonable to speculate that this year candidates will not win. Then why the effort when the opposition is so great?

1. To break the monolithic politics which has a stranglehold on the Negro communities throughout Mississippi. This can only be done by building bases of power throughout the state around the serious candidates for all local, county, state and national offices. Negroes must have a choice at the polls other the candidates provided by the
2. To show that if Negroes had the right to vote they would support candidates who stand for programs which would benefit all the people of Mississippi.
3. To raise the issues with the people of Mississippi which will not be raised by the regular Democratic and Republican candidates, nor by the news media throughout most of the state. Last November gubernatorial candidate Aaron Henry, state NAACP stumped the state on four issues: the right to vote, police brutality and discrimination in the courts, and education and employment.
4. And to use the campaigns as a means of organizing Negro communities around their most important problems. Through the campaigns other programs can be explained, such as the community center and library projects, food and welfare program, or consumer boycotts to support voter registration and employment demands.



5. Through the campaigns a general interest in political affairs will be aroused. An interest long dormant because of the monolithic nature of Mississippi politics. Where there is interest, education is also possible. And therefore, it will be possible through these campaigns to inform the Negroes and whites throughout the state about what is in their interests to support.

The actual conduct of the campaigns. Using the TV and radio, the newspapers and the wire services, leafleting and posters

The third step will be the actual conduct of the campaigns for Congress and the Senate. Every effort will be made to bring the campaign to the people. District and state-wide stumping will be supported by leaflets, and posters, and TV, Radio and Newspaper advertising, and extensive public relations work,

The most important feature of the campaigning will be the TV and radio appearances that the candidates and their supporters can make. For Mississippi this represents an important breakthrough in mass communication to both Negroes and whites, and a radical change in the image the whites have of Negroes, and that many Negroes have of Mississippi politics. It is imperative that Negroes begin to feel they can participate in politics. Running candidates is not enough: the campaigns must be brought to the people. And it must not be forgotten; whites throughout the state will have the opportunity to see Negroes speaking about the world without the stereotype heretofore always presented by all sources of information in their lives.

The fourth step, which runs concurrently with the third, consists of Freedom Vote or unofficial elections for the Congressional and Senatorial posts. In these elections, as with the Freedom Vote for Governor campaign, staff workers will conduct the elections throughout the state in Freedom polls at churches, places of business and from vote-mobiles. All those who are Freedom registered, that is, registered in the Freedom under COFO standards in the Freedom registration books, will be eligible to vote in the Freedom Vote elections. One of the procedures under consideration is for the Freedom registered person to be given an official card to show at the Freedom poll when he votes. In this manner all votes can be accounted for, and possibility of voting more than once eliminated. (That is, when he comes to vote, his card is punched so that he can't present the card elsewhere and vote again.)











3. The food and welfare program-- The food and welfare program was established to give aid to Negro families which ~~in the Delta region was particularly acute~~ which could not get work. Food and clothing is brought from the North to be distributed to the members of these families. For instance, shoes to children who need them in order to be able to go to school. Or food to those families which do not have enough money to afford to buy the ~~basic~~ necessities to cook even a meal a day for any member of the family. Special emphasis is given to those who have met reprisals because of voter registration efforts or for participation in any phase of the COFO program. ~~This is done because COFO is unable to give aid to all the people of the state who are in need--so much more is needed to do that!~~ ~~Some of the reasons for this are:~~ We do this because COFO is unable to give aid to all the people of the state who are in need--so much more is needed to do that! ~~Some of the reasons for this are:~~ ~~This program was organized in the winter of 1962 in the face of the annual bitter winter frost which covers the Delta region. After the fall chopping and picking season on the plantations most Negro families are out of work until the following springtime. Food and clothing are scarce. Help was needed.~~ This program was organized in the winter of 1962 in the face of the annual bitter winter frost which covers the Delta region. After the fall chopping and picking season on the plantations most Negro families are out of work until the following springtime. Food and clothing are scarce. Help was needed.

4. Federal Programs--Congress has designed several programs specifically to meet the needs of impoverished families in rural areas. These programs have not been taken advantage of by the people for whom they have been designed because it has been left up to local authorities to be responsible for initiating or putting into effect the necessary machinery. Also, the Federal Government has not adequately informed the rural people of these programs or how they can take advantage of them. The purpose of this program is to conduct this effort: to inform the rural families of their rights under Federal legislation and help them take advantage of it. These programs include the ~~Extension Service~~ Farm Home Administration programs, (there are several of these); program which can be set up under authority given by the Manpower Development Training Act; Area Redevelopment Administration programs (there are several ways in which these can be utilized); the Health, Education and Welfare Department has several hundred programs which can be adapted for use in rural areas. The Extension Service, though it has been designed for all farmers, does not serve low-income farmers. We intend to fill this gap by visiting the homes of the low-income farm families, doing the farm extension and home economist's agents' work for them.



5. Community Centers--This is another program designed to meet needs of Negro families which are

5. Community Centers--The Community Centers will be a building or set of buildings, including a library and set of classrooms, where efforts will be made to meet the fundamental needs of the <sup>low-income</sup> people in their respective communities. They will be an educational center where both the youth and the adults can come to acquire some skill in reading, writing, and domestic training, such as sewing, home repair, etc. They will serve as a training center where people can learn such skills as upholstery, mechanical and clerical training, TV and radio repair, and training for home industry development. The Centers will provide recreation for the youth through films, reading clubs and drama clubs, libraries, etc. The Centers will also provide an opportunity for education of the community in the other COFO programs, such as voter registration, and political education. A concerted effort will be made to help the community breathe democracy into the political processes of the state.

Why are these centers needed? First, to combat the White Citizens' Council Five-Year Plan to run one-half the Negroes in the Delta out of the state. At present, Negroes comprise about two-thirds of the population of the Delta cotton-rich counties. Therefore, if Negroes obtain the right to vote in these counties they would represent a threat to the stranglehold plantation owners now have over the sharecroppers and their families. Through mechanization and physical intimidation, plantation owners have been forcing Negroes off the farms at the rate of tens of thousands per year. Unable to get jobs elsewhere in the state because of white-only hiring policies, the Negroes are forced off their farms, must seek employment outside the state.

The Community Centers program is an effort to find and provide ways in which Negro families can remain in their home state through new economic bases.

Second, the Negro community is unlike the white community. If there is a movie theater in the Negro community at all, it is old, run-down and shows mostly third-rate Hollywood productions. In most cases there are no library facilities at all.



There are no child care centers or health clinics, no training centers or employment services for Negroes in most ~~in~~ communities.

And in the <sup>entire</sup> Delta, there are no accredited Negro high schools! In fact, in the entire state, with a ~~population~~ Negro population of more than 900,000, there are only 10 ~~Negro~~ accredited Negro high schools. That means the teachers are unaccredited, the facilities unaccredited, the curriculum unaccredited. It means that the pupils have unaccredited diplomas, if they graduate, and ~~xxxxxx~~ if they choose one of the more desirable ~~xx~~ "Negro" jobs, i.e., teaching, they become an unaccredited teacher. And therefore, must teach in an ~~xx~~ unaccredited school.

And, too, there are likely to be no guidance facilities for Negro pupils, or their parents.

~~The Community Center~~ introduce to Mississippi  
The Community Center will try to ~~provide~~ provide a new conception of ~~the community~~ of how to tackle the problems of the community.



Structure--The COFO staff is divided into the five Congressional districts. Each District has a leader who is a representative on the Staff Executive Committee, along with the Program and Asst. Program Director appointed by a vote of the entire staff.

The monthly budget for the staff (including the central office in Jackson, Budget for Operating Expenses) totals \$5,118.92. It is hoped that by the summer there will be sufficient finances to double the size of the staff. At present, there are approximately 55 full-time staff members. The average expense per staff member, including telephone bills, transportation, rent, food and clothing, petty cash, the operation of the central office, and the expenses of the volunteer workers, is roughly \$23 per week, or 93 dollars per month.

for the five off. In addition, we would like to expand the communications department budget, which at present is included in the monthly budget statement presented directly above. In order to conduct the political campaigns as designed above, and to keep the public informed daily of events within the state, especially the incidents of intimidation and harassment, an independent budget of roughly \$3,500 per month is needed. That would include TV and radio time, newspaper advertising, phone bills, leaflet and poster production and distribution costs, transportation, postage, supplies and funds to enable staff from the building the staff department's staff.

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