

## PHOTO DEPARTMENT REPORT

Since SNCC has had a Photo Department it has, perhaps, perhaps, more often been a source of problems than of accomplishment on any long-term, consistent basis. Most of the reasons for this are now (hopefully) a part of SNCC history. At present the department is organized so that it can fill its primary responsibilities and begin to expand into new areas.

The responsibilities of the Photo Department are:

(1) Fulfilling the pictorial needs of SNCC field projects. In the past six months these have primarily been centered around the Dallas and Lowndes County elections, The Mississippi March, the anti-draft demonstrations in Atlanta, the Atlanta rebellion. Also two filmstrips dealing with co-ops have been produced as well as the usual filling of requests from various SNCC offices.

(2) The Photo Department maintains an ever growing file of photographs dealing with rural and urban black life, so that requests can be filled easily.

(3) The Photo Department also maintains contact with domestic and foreign newspapers and periodicals, both for the purpose of selling photographs and for propaganda purposes.

## FINANCES

SNCC Photo maintains a separate account from photographs sold as well as contributions that have been solicited. During the past six months it has not been necessary to

use funds from SNCC or Student Voice accounts to purchase the necessary photographic supplies. At the present moment there is approximately fifty dollars in the account.

Money in the account is used solely to buy supplies. Personal photographic equipment is bought with the photographer's money, not that of the department. Likewise, if the photographer wishes to print some pictures for his own use, he has to purchase his own paper. Occasionally, funds are taken from the account for a photographer's personal use if he is on a SNCC assignment. This was done when Rufus Hinton needed money to cover the Alabama elections.

At one time withdrawals were made from the account on any photographer's verbal say-so. I have initiated a policy that all requests for fund must be in writing and signed by myself. In this manner ~~the~~ possibility of needless purchases is eliminated and in general, helps the department operate more as a business.

SNCC Photo has to maintain a precarious balance between being outright capitalistic and yet, fulfill its responsibilities. At one time SNCC photographers made money by getting assignments from major magazines and photographic agencies. The Department and SNCC profited greatly. In light of SNCC's new policy of working to build the black community and support itself from the black community, I feel that SNCC Photo should do the same as much as it can. This means selling a photograph to a black publication or a radical publication for five or ten dollars when we could

sell the same photograph for twenty-five dollars elsewhere. It means quite often giving photographs to black publications, like Karenga's Harambee and Liberator. However, I feel that if SNCC Photo can corner that five and ten dollar market here and among radical press in Asia, Africa and South America, we won't miss those assignments from AP and UP. More important, we will be doing what we can to further the over-all aims of the organization.

#### PERSONNEL

There are now four photographers on staff. They are Bob Fletcher, Rufus Hinton, Doug Harris and myself. Doug is preparing to take a six month leave of absence. During this time the remaining three of us will divide up whatever work is required in Alabama, but Bob Fletcher will have the major responsibility.

As of now we have divided responsibility for SNCC projects as follows:

Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and Arkansas --

Bob Fletcher.

Georgia, Florida, South and North Carolina --

Rufus Hinton.

Northern offices -- Requests will be filled by whatever photographer is available.

I will be responsible for the running of the Atlanta office, along with Roberta Simmons, our present office and darkroom assistant.

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SNCC PHOTO AND SOUTHERN PROJECTS

It is most desirable that requests for a photographer by a project be put in writing whenever possible. This helps the photographer have a clear idea of what the project desires of him and for what purposes the photographs are going to be used. The more the photographer knows before he goes into a project area the better he is able to photograph. It is very important that the photographer understand your concepts so that he can give you the photographs you can use most effectively.

Several projects have mentioned that there are young people in their areas interested in photography and would we train them. Although training young photographers is to our own interest, there is considerable expense involved. SNCC Photo cannot assume any but responsibility for itself at present, and, with the limited personnel we have at present, our own participation as teachers in such projects would be limited.

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH NORTHERN OFFICES

In the past, SNCC Photo's relationship with northern offices has generally been one of supplying photographs for fund-raising events. However, as more northern offices transform themselves into organizing projects, their photographic needs are going to be the same as those of the southern projects. Initially, the northern offices should utilize local black photogra-

phers, if possible. If not, something will be worked out.

#### PUBLICATIONS

As we see it at present, SNCC Photo will be the source for many publications: photo-essays, special reports, children's books, etc. As black Americans we are daily bombarded with the image of white America on billboards, magazine ads, etc. It is time that we began to return a little of the fire and inundate the black community with visual images of blackness.

It is not enough to tell a man he is black if he still has nothing else to look at but white.

In the past six months SNCC Photo has put together the following:

(1) SNCC wall calendar --- All of us have walked in the homes of black people and seen the despicable Pepsi-Cola calendar. The SNCC wall calendar presents a photograph for each month of the black South and was designed by Jennifer Lawson and me for distribution in the South. The calendar also includes important dates in the history of black people.

(2) I am initiating a periodical called PERSPECTIVE which will be a vehicle for photographs and essays giving the SNCC viewpoint on various topics and events. The first one is on the Atlanta rebellion and is an analysis of the role urban renewal played in producing certain environmental conditions. PERSPECTIVE is, of course, open to staff.

The following publications are in various stages:

(1) An autobiography of Mrs. Hamer taken from taped interviews taken by Mary Vareha and I have made. It will include

many photographs of the Delta.

(2) A photo-essay on black power for the black community.

(3) A book of photographs by SNCC photographers.

(4) A staff photo book, showing who was doing what with whom during the past few years of glorious SNCC history.

(5) Color postcards of black women to sell on black college campuses.

(6) A collection of sayings from the black people of Lowndes County, collected by Bob Mants. Will include many photographs of the county.

It is my hope that these publications will enable SNCCPhoto to cover the production costs for these and eventually, if we make a profit, we will be able to pay the salaries of staff photographers from our account.

#### FILMSTRIPS

At present there are several filmstrips available made by Bob Fletcher. One is on Vietnam and two others are on how to organize co-ops. I hope that it will be possible for everyone to see these filmstrips at this staff meeting.

#### CONCLUSION

SNCC has been woefully lacking in its ability to get its point of view across in the black community. This is becomingly increasingly important in view of the attacks mounted by former "friends" and by such