

A Note about the Friends of SNCC groups -- what do they do? 21

Friends of SNCC groups do essentially five things. Let me try to give you an example of each.

1. Friends of SNCC groups (and SNCC offices in the North) raise money and collect supplies. They plan concerts, parties, art shows, special mailings and other things designed to raise money. Sometimes people like Harry Belafonte help by coming to a house party where money is raised. High school students go door to door in their neighborhoods giving out SNCC literature and asking for funds to help voter registration work. On college campuses some students organize big drives for money which try to get a donation from every student -- and, at least, to inform every student about SNCC. Also, Friends of SNCC usually have food and clothing drives during the fall and the winter and try to collect office supplies and community center supplies in their communities.
2. Friends of SNCC groups raise bail money if it is needed. Boston Friends of SNCC did a great deal of work this summer by using a bond pledge system. That meant that they had bail handy at all times ready to wire down when it was needed. We are now trying to have every Friends group do this so that we will always have adequate bail sources.
3. Friends of SNCC groups spread the word of SNCC. They do this by preparing publicity for our activities in the South, by calling newspapers and radio stations about daily incidents. They also do this by speaking to any group that wants to hear a SNCC speaker. They also show SNCC films in their communities, pass out leaflets on the street about things that are happening and just generally contacting people and talking to them about what we do.
4. Friends of SNCC groups recruit people to come to work in our projects in the South. Last spring they were responsible for recruiting most of the Northern volunteers and for screening and interviewing them before they came down. They are still recruiting people for the fall and spring and will, of course, be doing alot of recruiting for next summer.
5. Friends of SNCC groups also do what we call Northern Support work. This is becoming a much more important part of their jobs as the months go by. What they do is to pressure the Justice Department and the President (although they haven't moved very far yet) by sending letters and telegrams, by organizing demonstrations at federal buildings and by getting people in their area with influence to speak out about what is happening in the South. They helped alot with the FDP challenge at Atlantic City -- by visiting delegates and by organizing thousands of letters and telegrams to the Democratic delegates in support of the FDP. They'll be ehlping, too, with the Congressional challenge in different kinds of ways.

We now have Friends of SNCC groups in almost every major city. We also have newly formed Friends of SNCC groups on about 60 campuses and this number will grow as the school year continues. In nine cities -- Boston, New York, Detroit, Washington, DC, Philadelphia, Princeton, NJ, San Francisco, Chicago and Los Angeles, we have people on our staff who are paid from Atlanta and who work full time raising money and doing the other things. In the other 50 or so cities where we have Friends of SNCC groups volunteers run them in their spare time.

WHY ARE FRIENDS OF SNCC GROUPS IMPORTANT?

It should be fairly clear already why Friends of SNCC groups are important and why they are an integral part of SNCC's work. They are the people who keep the Northern "supply lines" open. We all understand our financial needs -- we buy cars, have WATS lines, need car insurance, pay rent on many buildings, have a big salary budget and buy mimeograph paper and presses to run leaflets on. We all know, too, that the people we work with in the South could not possibly meet our financial needs although they do as

much as they possibly can. In addition, the South is not politically influential -- or at least our "part" of the South isn't although the racist Congressmen are. That is one reason why the Justice Department gets involved so little unless Northern students are involved or unless Northern people speak out on our behalf. This is a real problem which we hope will be solved some day but in the meantime we have to depend on people in the North to bring pressure on those in power -- to force them to move.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN ABOUT THE STAFF/?

Essentially it means that we must all be aware of the work Friends of SNCC are doing and we must constantly feed them any information we think would be helpful to them in raising money or in doing Northern support work. They have to have news -- every day if possible on what we are doing. They must understand the SNCC program and the needs of various projects if they are to help us out.

→ One more note -- there is a bigger report on the Friends of SNCC for anyone who wants to read it or have a copy. Please let Betty Garman know if you want it.