

NSM BROCHURE: FIRST DRAFT

CONFIDENTIAL

Northern Student Movement

### HISTORY

The Northern Student Movement (NSM) was organized by Peter Countryman, a junior philosophy major at Yale, in October, 1961, when a committee of the Student Christian Movement of New England decided to start an autonomous coordinating body for northern student civil rights work. By the spring of 1962, some field work in the Negro ghetto of Philadelphia led to a summer project in which 20 college students were recruited to live and hold jobs in North Philadelphia and, in their off hours, to tutor Negro secondary school students. A similar operation was begun in Harlem early in the summer.

By 1963, NSM had full-time projects in eight cities of the North, most of them concentrating on tutorial programs.

### PHILOSOPHY

It soon became apparent to the NSM project staffs and volunteers that tutoring to remedy educational deficiencies was a treatment for only one symptom of ghetto life. All around us were deep-seated economic, political and physical problems as well. We found millions of Negroes imprisoned in poverty and dependency by middle-class institutions not of their own making, which influence and control every aspect of their lives.

These institutions--schools, employment agencies, welfare organizations, health services, government departments of every description--are supposed to serve the needs of the people in a democratic society. Instead, these institutions too often perpetuate the helplessness and hopelessness of the people in the depressed urban areas. NSM workers have come to realize that it is the inability of the oppressed to influence social institutions and change them that is the source of their greatest suffering.

As Michael Harrington has observed, "...Negroes in this country are not simply the victims of a series of iniquitous statutes. The American economy, the American society, the American unconscious are all racist....To be equal, the Negro requires something much more profound than a way 'into' the society; he needs a transformation of some of the basic institutions of the society." The NSM experience in the Harlems of the country have validated Harrington's analysis. We have come to see that the attainment of full freedom transcends "civil rights" and demands a movement which confronts the institutional barriers to equality and, most important, enables people to assume responsibility for their own lives.

We believe that the poor must become involved in this process of change; it is they who are oppressed and must end their oppression. As organizers, we help by encouraging the development of channels through which the poor can challenge those institutions which now so limit their lives.

NSM further believes that the so-called Negro problem is in fact the American problem. The issues posed by the Negro struggle for equality are not simple issues of social equality and acceptance, but go to the root of political and economic problems which have plagued the country for many years. NSM's predominantly Negro staff is concerned not simply with the elimination of racial oppression but with the transformation of the entire society. We believe that those institutions which perpetuate racism also perpetuate poverty, slums, inadequate education, citizens' powerlessness to affect foreign policy, and a variety of other social ills.

#### STRUCTURE

NSM now operates projects in Detroit, Boston, Hartford, New York and Philadelphia. The staff of the central office in New York consists of an Executive Director, Staff Administrator, Campus Director and a Communications Director. Project staffs include a Project Director and as many other workers as budgets permit.

NSM is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization supported by private contributions and occasional foundation grants. Staff members work for a maximum of \$40 per week, when available. At present, 50 staff members and some 2500 college volunteers are working within the NSM framework.

### NSM-Detroit Project

### HISTORY

The Detroit Project was organized in June, 1962, as the Detroit Education Project, a tutorial. In its first year the DEP involved some 300 college volunteer tutors and 1,000 junior high and senior high school student tutees. It was supported largely by a grant of \$10,000 from the McGregor Foundation. The Education Project was highly praised by educators, students, parents, and the press. Its functions were gradually absorbed by churches and by the Detroit Board of Education's J.F.K. Memorial Fund.

The Detroit NSM staff also organized a non-tutorial project, the Adult Community Movement for Equality (ACME), described below. NSM discontinued its tutorial program in December, 1964, and changed the project name to the NSM-Detroit Project. We are now supported solely by private contributions from individuals and organizations.

### STRUCTURE

The NSM-Detroit Project paid staff comprises a Project Director, a secretary, and two full-time organizers; volunteer staff provide an additional community organizer, secretary, and a treasurer. Salaries during 1964 fluctuated between \$25 and \$30 per week.

### PROGRAM

In keeping with its overall objective of creating a mass movement in the

ghettoes of the North, the NSM-Detroit Project staff has concentrated its efforts in recent months on the development of a local East Side organization, the Adult Community Movement for Equality (ACME).

The only civil rights organization on Detroit's East Side, ACME has evolved into an increasingly powerful organization. Its membership includes welfare mothers, factory workers, unemployed men and women, and housewives. Prior to their involvement in ACME, none of its members had previously participated in any civil rights or community-based organization. Hence, ACME's programs reflect the concerns of the Negro majority. Perhaps most significant in ACME's evolution has been the emergence of an increasingly sophisticated and capable group of indigenous leaders.

ACME has conducted both city-wide and precinct level demonstrations against police brutality, as well as successful demonstrations against employment discrimination by a chain variety store. ACME has participated in voter registration campaigns and has forced the city to tear down dilapidated buildings in the neighborhood and to provide new recreation facilities. We The People, a bi-weekly newsletter written and prepared by ACME members, has a circulation in the community of over 1,000 copies. Most important, however, ACME has begun to demonstrate to itself and the East Side Negro community that organization equals power, and that power produces change. For the first time, ACME members are confronting the institutions which have oppressed them and are exerting control over their own destinies.

Currently, the NSM staff is providing organizational assistance to an emerging West Side group similar to ACME.

Future plans include a massive summer program centered around the issue of police brutality and general police-community relations and ultimately the expansion of NSM activities to encompass Negro communities in outstate Michigan.

#### HOW YOU CAN HELP

Like the areas we work in, the Detroit Project itself is economically

depressed. Its needs are limitless. Donations are needed for staff salaries, office rent, supplies, and operating expenses. Contributions of office supplies, food, filing cabinets, typewriters, desks, book shelves, cars, and photographic equipment are always welcome.

Your support is needed. NSM is not a membership organization and has no regular source of income. We rely solely on contributions from interested individuals and organizations.

Donations to NSM are tax deductible; checks should be made payable to the NSM-Detroit Project. Monthly pledges are particularly appreciated.

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