

THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL CENTER

A Preliminary Prospectus in Five Parts

- I The Library
- II The Institute for Afro-American Studies
- III The Other Elements
- IV Administration
- V Development

Vincent Harding, Director
The Library Project
671 Beckwith Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

December, 1968

INTRODUCTION

During the summer of 1968, Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr. members of her immediate family, and a group of intimate advisors took several significant steps towards the establishment of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center. Included among these acts were:

- a. The decision to establish this living Memorial Center in Atlanta, in the vicinity of Dr. King's birthplace and Ebenezer Baptist Church. Later it was decided that certain elements of the Memorial Center would be located in the Atlanta University Center area.
- b. The establishment of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library Project--with its own advisory council--as the first element of the King Center.
- c. The request to a group of scholars and artists in the Atlanta University Center to develop a proposal for the second element of the King Center: The Institute for Afro-American Studies. (That proposal was subsequently approved in substance by Mrs. King and the other affected persons.)

This preliminary prospectus seeks to summarize the subsequent developments and needs in the Library Project, to offer a synopsis of the thirty-five page proposal for the Institute, and to describe briefly the plans for the other elements of the Center.

I The Library

A. Description

Conceived as the first element of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center, the Library Project is now several months old. Its initial major goal has been to gather as quickly and efficiently as possible all available archival records which document the post-1954 phase of the Afro-American Freedom Movement, including the vast stores of audio-visual materials.

The papers of Dr. King and of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference will be the focal point of this collection, but it will also include significant amounts of material from many other individuals and organizations. For instance, promises to donate relevant files and other records have already been made by James Farmer, Stokely Carmichael, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, the Northern Student Movement, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and leaders of the Albany (Ga.), Birmingham, and Mississippi phases of the Freedom Movement--to name only a few. Wherever significant items have already been deposited in other collections, the Library will attempt at least to obtain copies of such records.

The Project has gathered a staff of ten persons, including an historian of the Movement, two experienced archivists and a librarian. It is temporarily located in the seven-year-old Library building of Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta. There, such considerations as temperature control and security are well in hand, but the available physical space is not likely to be adequate for more than two years, if current collecting plans are realized.

B. Budget

Funded primarily by foundation planning grants, the Project has a first-year budget of \$150,000--a portion of which is yet unmet. However, over and above the current budget, the Library is now seeking an additional grant of \$50,000 to make possible the beginning of its Oral History Section within the next several months. This is especially urgent when one considers, for instance, the older persons in Dr. King's family, church and other associations whose reminiscences need to be recorded immediately.