

December 11, 1964

To Friends of SNCC

Enclosed is a statement about COFO which we prepared in the form of a press release announcing the Mississippi staff meeting held this past weekend.

This information should help you answer some of the questions being raised as a result of the past several week's inaccurate and sloppy news reporting on COFO. A few points which are not covered in the release:

1. The Jackson office was closed for a week before Thanksgiving not because of the so-called "rupture" but in order to reorganize the office physically and functionally. The office is operating now at full capacity.
2. SCLC did not pull out of COFO. Soon after the first articles appeared Martin Luther King issued a denial. At the same time his statement which was reported in several ways that "SCLC would continue to give nominal support to COFO" may have also been misleading. This does not represent in any way a cut back in SCLC's activity with respect to COFO. SCLC's support has never involved much more than a little money, the citizenship school program and a few staff workers.
3. The national NAACP never considered itself a part of COFO -- only the state branches -- of which federation Dr. Aaron Henry is president. The state branches did vote to withdraw pending discussion at the National Action Council in January. The reason for withdrawal was given as non-involvement in decision making. But Aaron Henry reports that he sent notices to each chapter each time COFO meetings took place and encouraged them to attend. (COFO meetings are open to all people working in Mississippi on the various program aspects).

If there are other problems in explaining the press stories, please don't hesitate to write.

Freedom, *Betty*  
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Northern Coordinator