

May 12, 1966

Dear Phil,

Thanks for your latest. Re the article in the N.Y. Times: a typical example of, you'll pardon the expression, kept press. This headline and article are misleading at best, and very clearly written to antagonize "liberal whitefolk" ("What's the matter with those crazy niggers; don't they realize that if they vote they can elect wonderful people of the calibre of Robert Kennedy and Jake Javits; those schwartzes are nuts"). SNCC urged Negroes not to vote in the Demo primary, not "Notx to Vote" (not that this wouldn't have been an equally sound position). They urged them not to vote in the Demo primary so that they could vote in an independent (Black Panther) primary. Under Alabama law you can only vote in one primary. The Black Panthers set up a primary on May 3 while the Demo primary was going on at which black belt Negroes voted among several candidates for each office ~~xxxxxxx~~ for the winner who would run against the Demo and Repub candidates in the November general elections. In Ala the way a party gets on the ballot is to simply have a primary and run candidates at it, and then have the winners appear on the general election ballot. ~~xxxxxx~~ But the NY Times wants to establish something else in the minds of contributors - the irrationality of the radical wing of the civil rights movement - it's like that bullshit about some SCIO prick who made a remark about how SNCC just stirs up trouble but never come in to do the hard core work of registering voters (no, I think it was an NAACP'er who said that) which is so damn funny as SNCC was registering folk in the black belt when those bastards didn't know there was anything south of Washington DC. Anyhow, they want the Alabama folk to go along with Martin and his "responsible, respectable candidates", the handpicked ministers and the "good white folk" like Richmond Flowers who will representx the new south like Adam Powell represents Harlem. Speaking of Flowers, Stokely C said something beautiful a while ago when someone asked him if he was backing Flowers for Gov of Ala. He said, "Flowers said he's for justice, he didn't say he's for us, and ther's a big difference". Anyhow, the Ala policital move is the best thing happening in SNCC. Most important is that they learned from the Atlantic City fiasco. MFDP spokesmen have been issuing statements endorsing the Black Panter party and stating how they learned that the Demo Party will sell you out in a minute, and that Negroes can't work within it, "generous compromises" notwithstanding. However, all is not well in SNCC. They are now into an insane nationalstic thing, and not a very well thought out position at all - just a kind of mindless reation to white folk in general; something which had to come eventually, but very unfortunate as they have succeeded in driving out most of the whites (and the best people) in SNCC; ie. Perdue, Bob Zellner, Jack Minis, Mendy Samstein, Nancy Coop

etc. A lot of "new people" have come into power - people without the insights or capacity of Moses. They are now having a staff retreat and the whites on staff and volunteers are excluded. This has been developing for a long while but is definite now. The local project director (Isaac Simpkins) doesn't like the new position, but goes along without protest. I just called Jim Parry at SNCC to get more recent details on this development (I had initially learned of it from Randy when I saw him in NY) and Jim just talked to Rufus Hinton a young Negro from Atlanta who is working in Cordele. It seems that this conference will make or break the new "new nationalism". It is supposedly been ~~xx~~ proposed at the staff meeting (or will be proposed rather) that all whites on staff get off, and no more be taken on. The leaders of this are Bill Hall (a cat who worked in Harlem for a long time) and Stanley Wise from North Carolina, both fairly new to SNCC but part of the new "black wave". They are the two strongest advocates, with most of their strength coming from the Atlanta office and the Atlanta "Vine City" project (which is all ~~xxx~~ black), but they do have support from some of the field staff. The conference should be a show down on the issue. John Lewis will supposedly resign if it goes through. Cleve Sellers is against it. Moses' position is to just make it uncomfortable enough for whites to leave without forcing them out (I guess he's trying to work with both sides). Stokely isn't rabid, but doesn't want white organizers (a reasonable position) but very disappointingly guys like Cobb and Courtland Cox are part of the anti-white movement. I'll let you know when I hear more about this. The above info comes third hand as to who is taking what side (from Rufus to Jim) so I can't really guarantee the accuracy of the positions, but there is a very strong anti-white feeling, rest assured, if it drove out people like Perdue, Zellner, and Minis whose whole lives are the Movement.

In your letter you asked where Fort Lee, NJ is. It's just on the other side of the Geo Washington Bridge and any but from the Bridge (NY side) will take you there.

Best,

Dennis

cc: Mina G.