

May 27, 1966

Dear Phil,

A whole new, wierd thing is happening with SNCC. Yesterday Stoakley, Stanley Wise, and others of the "new view" in SNCC arrived in Albany. The staff all came together for a meeting which I was unable to attend as we were out of town, but have gotten reports on. Before I go into that, Sherrod is back in Albany and this summer is bringing down about 30 whitefolks from Union Theo Seminary. He had a big fight with SNCC in Atlanta, but it was finally decided that since he wasn't part of SNCC (he told them if SNCC didn't like him bringing whites to Albany they could go fuck themselves) he was free to do so if the local people wanted it. Anyhow at the meeting things were frighteningly authoritarian. All sorts of rules were put into effect like only 3 staff members in each county; no eating in restaurants; must live off local community; must get up by 6 a.m.; etc. Also, after it was decided which 3 would work in Cordele, Rev. Fulwood who wasn't to work there but who lives in Cordele was told to either move to a new county or get off staff. Then Stoakley said a wierd thing. He said that he wanted each team in a county to get tight with people in one particular church so that they could get the church on a moment's notice, whenever they want it. But the way he said it expressed it was: "You want to be able to get a church in a minute, so if we want to hold a class in guerilla warfare we will have a place." He could just as easily have said "...to hold a freedom school...or a mass meeting...or anything else" but "guerilla warfare" was the example he used. He has made other statements similar to this before, but I still don't know whether its just smart talk or what. They also announced they are out of the integration business and a couple of people were going around in Cordele putting folks down who wanted to transfer their kids, and talking a kind of separate but equal thing re the schools. They seem to be pushing people too fast - and trying to extend the black power concept of Lowndes County, Ala (where it is numerically feasible) to areas where it just can't work. The anti-white thing is being handled better. They just have rules like whites cant do organizing, cant do research, etc. This leaves whites nothing to do but "work organizing whites", without telling them point blank to get lost. However, with Sherrod back in SWGa I dont think this will be very effective as he is dead set against this - feels whites keep people human by showing them there are good whitefolks (the old theory) and also letting them have normal relations with whites. Anyhow, most of this stuff is very depressing, tho it might make some sense in the long run. Also, the theory among the "new view" is that the war in Viet Nam is white folks mess, so white folks should clean it up; ie. that SNCC will not have anything to do with anti-war protests.

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I was just sent a letter from Natl Lawyers Guild that Ken Cloke was offered a job with them organizing law student groups and new young members, so I guess the Welfare Rights thing is out.

I found a note I made to myself to ask you about a derogatory comment you made about Treuhaft running for DA. I can't find the comment now, but maybe you remember. Please amplify.

Mina sent me a copy of her letter of 5-18 to you. Her comment about "this shift in leadership implies a break with King and his attempt to lead the Negro political effort into the liberal wing of the Demo party" is correct. But of course this has been the position for quite some time - huge fight in Alabama over the Black Panthers with SCLC's top man putting down SNCC in the press as totally irresponsible, and some say the source for the NY Times story headlined "SNCC urges Negroes not to vote". What you have now is people who are so totally alienated to King that they will not indulge themselves in the "image presented to the public" of harmony between SNCC and SCLC. SCLC is out to sell the Negro vote throughout the south - getting up big voter education clinics and the like all over Ga and probably other states - all wheeling and dealing for Lyndon's boys on top level jobs in turn for patronage in post office, and also state jobs like hiway dept and fish and game dept. This is serious as I have heard it from alot of folks - that SCLC is putting out literature talking about black people getting jobs with highway dept, fish and game, etc.

Good news, I just got my little hands on the notes (summary) of the meeting and also working papers which were presented at last staff meeting in Tennessee. Enclosed. It seems SNCC is going to rely solely on southern support. Also, the "guidelines" are those followed in Lowndes which were "voted for" by staff after alot of pressure from Stoakley.

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