

COUNCIL OF FEDERATED ORGANIZATIONS
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May 25, 1964

Dear Norma,

Thanks loads for the people. We got backlash about the SNCC people from Americus from other sources, too. I don't know anything we can do except to say that we've tried to be honest about the situation here, ~~but~~ and we don't believe that we've underplayed the element of intimidation and possible danger. One of our workers here in Jackson was arrested last night on a trumped-up charge (drunkenness and vagrancy) and beaten in jail, and that is very ~~xxx~~ serious; I wouldn't want it to happen to anybody, but it does happen. However, I don't believe in talking about danger merely to dramatize oneself, and in exaggerating the danger to elevate oneself before others, to be a bit stuffy about it. Therefore, we ~~xxxx~~ down here can only say that it's dishonest to say to people that they won't get arrested, or if they do nothing will happen to them--but it's also dishonest to ~~say~~ say that they ~~x~~ certainly will get arrested. In general if people mind their own business and keep out of the cops' way, the chances of arrest are minimized; you never can tell, but that's a ~~x~~ fair generalization. The next point to keep in mind is that none of these people were from Mississippi, and there's much myth-making power in "Mississippi" especially among frustrated SNCC workers who HAVEN'T made it to Mississippi. So I think you could safely debunk some of what they might have said. ^{As} a matter of fact, we're pretty damn mad about the thing--insofar as it ~~implies~~ implies that we don't know the situation or that we've tried to conceal it. If anything I have occasionally felt that we were being somewhat melodramatic. We could laugh it off, ~~except~~ except that we might have ~~x~~ lost good people for no good reason~~x~~.

About the literacy materials, thanks very much for your work. We'll try to work out something. We are getting some people from the Laubach Institute, for better or worse and Septima Clark will be at the orientation with the SCLC stuff. I'm not ~~not~~ on their stuff, but what can I do? We have to have some stuff. I'll ~~write~~ work on the Army stuff just in case. Have you seen the Laubach materials? I'm not sure I saw all of them--I just saw two little reading ~~materials~~ texts and something called Streamlined English, but I wasn't impressed. The basic ~~literacy~~ literacy stuff, especially for foreign languages, was different; I thought it was OK, but the English reading matter was billious to me.

I hope you are getting the mailing, slowly. If not, we're printing it again, and we may have some to send late, or give out at orientation. We'll try to catch up with the new people. Thanks again.

Lois.