

2616 Speedway
Austin, Texas
June 3, 1964

Dear Ed,

I realize that you must be very busy at this ~~18~~ time, ~~happily~~ hope that you will forgive me for writing such a long letter, and apologize for not replying immediately to your letter of May 22.

You suggested that I keep working until July 1, and join ~~in~~ you in Washington County at ~~that~~ that time. I decided to compromise between the need for orientation and the need for money. I'll be coming with Bob Stone for the June ~~22~~ 21st orientation. I'll have money for subsistence through January. ~~Maybe~~ Hopefully, I'll be able to ~~see~~ secure a part-time job in November which I would be able to lose and still eat. Transportation costs will be cut by going with Bob.

Though I am certainly thankful for the sign of personal interest which you have shown in me, I have a number of reservations about working in the ~~E~~ White Community Project.

First of all, is the question of how to deal with the poor white's bigotry. Certainly, we must not be so rash in rejecting the racial culture which has been ingrained in them, that we erect a barrier of "outside agitator" hate between us. The main part of non-violence, I think, is to keep a cool head when faced with hatred, whether it be expressed in ~~violence~~ violence or in words. But this does not resolve the question of how to deal with their bigotry, it is only a tactic of diplomacy. The big mistake of the Populists in the '90's was putting the issue of economic identification with the Negroes above racial hate, only to have the conservatives turn around and stir up the racial hate again destroying the possibility of economic identification and destroying the Populists. Though Negro and white poor were brought very close together by their common economic problems and their hatred of rich ~~people~~ whites, many poor whites later left the movement to join the Klan at the provocation of racial identity. In other words, we cannot be satisfied with a superficial alliance between poor whites and Negroes because the power structure can break it up when they want to. We cannot ~~tolerate~~ tolerate a racial fear lying dormant in them, obscured for the moment by economic identification with Negroes. Ultimately, we must ask them to vote for the Negro candidates of the Freedom Democratic Party. We must overcome his intense racial hate, by our example of unequivocal support of the Negro civil rights movement. ^{The poor white} ~~He~~ must end up ready to listen to Mrs. Hamer campaign at their church. ~~of~~

Liberal Texas Democrats are timid on human rights questions, and Labor questions, and poverty questions because any boldness on their parts is answered by the conservatives by stirring up race hate in East Texas and by condemning "extremists and maybe even Communists" in West Texas.

Perhaps I am idealistic, but I have a great deal of faith in the Freedom Democratic Party.

Most of my "pseudo-liberal" and political friends assume that the party is only a strategic move to get Federal poll watchers into the state, to be abandoned thereafter for a paternalizing Dixiecrat party. This is -the approach Texas has taken.

I want the Freedom Democrats to become the Democratic Party of Mississippi. I want the Freedom Democrats to continue voter-registration- education work until that party has more political power than the Dixiecrats. ~~xxxxxx~~ I want the Freedom Democratic R Candidates to be as forthright about the kind of programs they want as Martin Luther King was in his book Why We Can't Wait. Take a stand and keep on harping on it until you win. I think that white moderates and no part of poor whites should be told from the beginning that ~~xxxxxxxx~~ the political program will ~~xxx~~ be toned down to get them in the party. It is a program which already represents their interests.

I don't have a map of Mississippi but if Greenville is not in the 2nd Congressional district, where the Freedom Democrats have the best chance to win, I want to know why. Support of the white moderate and poor white when Mrs. Hamer finally wins is the ultimate test of the validity of the Freedom Democrats. The nation and the world will judge us harshly if our first political victory is not a biracial one, that is if the Negro and white voters line up in blocks opposing one another, we will have lost. I found out where Greenville is, I am very, very pleased.

I like the idea of a Negro-led, created, and inspired party which whites work into. Many of my friends call this idea inverse racism. It's funny that they don't call ~~xxxx~~ a white created, led, and inspired party with Negroes moving into it a racial party. Wasn't the reason Aaron Henry got 80,000 votes last fall that Negroes were willing to sacrifice to support a Negro candidate representing issues of poverty and civil rights? They were enthusiastic because for the first time someone whom they could believe was offering ^{them} a means to obtain a full loaf of bread. Neither a nation ~~xxx~~ nor a man can exist half slave and half free. Concessions with the moderates, confining the Freedom Democrats to a program of half freedoms will produce an intolerable psychological strain in ^{the Negroes} ~~the~~ returning them finally to apathetic acceptance of how things are.

Following these political conceptions, means we will lose a large number of whites who resent our unequivocal stand beside the Freedom Democrats program. But isn't that better than pouring molasses on the works, molasses which will turn to rock candy when exposed to racial propaganda?

I have some other reservations. Your -statement ~~is~~ in your letter about the value of Southern whites disturbed me. It is indiscriminate. How about the white southerner's who have not learned the lessons of understanding and embracing the South? How about Northern students who have given up their self righteousness and can tell the southerner about how bad things are in Harlem? How about yankee Bob Stone who has had two years political campaigning for Negroes? How about specialists in agriculture, or liaisons for the Federal projects? How about Negroes workers to challenge them in an existential way once they have softened their racial hatred?

I have some reservations about your statement in the Southern Patriot saying the white student into the "right" of the Negro politically. I have some reservations about having to work with Charlie Smith the mad leafleteer who continually and without permission makes stuff to hand out to people on the streets on his little mimeo.

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If you still think you want me ~~in~~ in the White Community Project, I am willing, and eager to join you. If not, would you tell whoever's supposed to know that I'll be working in voter registration projects and have the enclosed card properly certified and sent to the National Council. Ed, if I have oversimplified the case; and therefore led myself astray in my thinking I will be ready to accept a better position, and though I intend to fight for my ideas, I will do so at the proper time being willing to follow orders the rest of the time.

It ~~would~~ would be nice if I had a schedule of the first orientation I will miss. Could you send me one? I want to be as well read for this effort as possible, so add any books or legal matters you think I should study. I would also like; a list of curriculum for the Freedom Schools, to use in soliciting efforts here in Austin.

I am anxious to meet you and start to work.

FREEDOM,

Bruce

Bruce Maxwell