

OFFICE ONLY

SNCC
6 Raymond St NW
Atlanta 14, Ga.

⑥ 12

To: All Friends of SNCC
Re: Enclosed letter to Burke Marshall
From: Betty Garman, Northern Coordinator

The enclosed (which some of you have already received) is a letter written from the McComb project staff to the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department and several Congressmen in Washington. It is a letter which chronicles the events in McComb since the "end" of the summer project and attempts to point out a situation there which many of us expected after the pressure of the summer was over. While harrassment and intimidation have not increased substantially in the rest of the state as yet, there is obviously still a need to plan some kind of political program in the North around the possibility that all of Mississippi could be like McComb within a few months time and that the federal government must not be allowed to cut back their summer committment (committment used here meaning what they did do this summer as opposed to what they did in the spring) because fewer white Northern volunteers are involved.

At least at this point, the letter enclosed ought to be reproduced and circulated as widely as possible with requests that the Justice Department be informed that people have not (to the extent that they have not) forgotten Mississippi in the rush of the election campaign and that people are prepared to force the issue openly and forcefully -- before and after the election -- if the response of the President and the Justice Department is either one of cutting back FBI forces, the presence of Justice Department officials, etc (which it clearly is) or one (in a sense the same thing) of stopping or minimizing activity because of the coming election.

Another suggestion would be to send the enclosed letter with a cover letter to various candidates for office (Congressmen particularly) in your area asking that they endorse specific demands being made on the Justice Department for stronger action in the South. Their response can then be made public during their campaigns for re-election. Other than that, it should be feasible to send this letter to newspapers as a letter to the editor -- noting that you are asking that they reprint it because it has an important message, etc. Last, but not least, use your own thoughts on how best to circulate the contents and to make the point about the still critical need for federal protection and federal action in Mississippi and across the South.

At some point very soon I hope to be able to write (or send out something detailed written by someone else) a statement about how and what federal involvement did take place this summer. Briefly it was my own observation that 1) the FBI force in the state was in fact increased by more than double but that 2) although the agents were most often quick to investigate a situation, arrests were seldom forthcoming (I think the summer total was four) and that 3) the whole notion of the effect of the presence of federal power was lost in the unwillingness of the FBI agents (or JD lawyers) to pressure local officials. For example, we often suggested that the FBI's or the JD lawyers go themselves to the jails to visit prisoners -- some who had been beaten and some who were simply arrested on outrageous charges. Very seldom was that done. We often suggested that a call to the sheriff expressing some concern about the manner in which justice was administered would be helpful -- again that was seldom done. In fact, newsmen did much more on this score than FBI's. And we know, in most cases, that federal presence is a partial deterrent to violent retaliation and even minor harrassments and intimidation. When situations were developing -- possible arrests or violence, etc. -- we often called the FBI and asked that they come to the scene. Their response -- we are not a protective agency (although when Martin King made his trip through Mississippi they saw fit to provide him with 10 agents plus Mississippi Highway Patrolmen for protection!) -- we usually said we understood; we did not want protection. We just wanted them to observe the situation and to be there -- and let it be known that they were around....more on this later...

Betty