

From: John Lewis

To: All SNCC Staff

I have been back from Africa for more than two weeks. I hope by now that each of you has a copy of the report on the trip. I hope to talk with each of you about Africa and the movement for liberation throughout Africa and how it relates to the Civil Rights Struggle in this country. I am convinced more than ever before that the social, economic, and political destiny of the black people of America is inseparable from that of our brothers of Africa.

On my arrival in Atlanta I was thoroughly informed about the questions and issues that were raised at both the staff meeting and the staff retreat. I have read the position papers and minutes, and talked with many members of the staff with great interest concerning the nature of your deliberations in Atlanta and Bay St. Louis. I only regret that I was unable to take part in the many sessions of serious discussion and thinking. Fortunately or unfortunately I was in Africa on what I like to call a "mission" of learning or an attempt to cement the relation between the Civil Rights Struggle in this country with the liberation movement in Africa.

Since being back, I have taken part in a Planning Committee Meeting, (the committee planning for the next staff meeting) which was held in Pine Bluff, Ark. I attended the COFO staff meeting in Hattiesburg. I am just returning from a four-day fund raising and speaking venture in the New York and Philadelphia area. The trip to New York and Philly is particularly the reason I am sending this memo to you at this time. I would be derelict in my duty if I didn't share with you some of my observations while in New York.

While in New York and Philly for four days, I had the opportunity to speak at five rallies and parties, and also attended two smaller meetings of supporters. At each of these gatherings some of the persons in attendance raised questions about the following:

The alleged coup in SNCC:

- a. "Bob Moses is no longer Director of the Mississippi Project, and he is out of the state."
- b. "Jim Forman is no longer Executive Secretary of SNCC."
- c. "John Lewis is no longer Chairman of SNCC."

The red-baiting of SNCC:

- a. "SNCC has been taken over by the communists."
- b. "Some of the key people in SNCC made a trip to Peking."
- c. "Most of the volunteers that SNCC recruited were communists or communist sympathizers."

Now we all know that there is not a word of truth in any of this. We all should know that Bob Moses is still the Director of COFO, Jim Forman is still the Executive Secretary of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and I am still SNCC's Chairman.