

REPORT

FROM: Anne Braden

TO: Jim Dombrowski and the SCEF Board

RE: Work since fall, 1963, board meeting.

I deeply regret the fact that I cannot attend the board meeting on May 16, the first I will have missed since I began working for SCEF, and I send a written report in lieu of my presence.

Most of my work for SCEF since the last board meeting falls into three categories:

1. Continuing educational work in the field of civil liberties, attempting to relate this to the civil rights movement. This includes considerable writing, including a new pamphlet on HUAC which I assume most of you have seen by now, or you soon will. It also includes a number of speaking engagements and personal contact.

I would like to add that I feel that the SCEF board can feel proud of the work it has done in recent years in this area of civil liberties. Time may show that it was one of the most crucial contributions the organization made to the movement. Much, much remains to be done, but because of the work SCEF has done in informing people, the civil rights movement is at least better prepared than it would have been otherwise to meet the ~~various~~ red-baiting attacks that have recently been mounted. Whether the movement as a whole meets these successfully yet remains an unanswered question, but the importance of SCEF's groundwork in this field is becoming more obvious.

2. Considerable work, along with Carl, on helping to stimulate and develop the growing movement among white students in the South. This has involved going to a series of meetings, much correspondence, running a sort of motel as the young people have happened to be in our area, and just generally trying to be available and helpful when needed.

There will be fuller reports at the May 16 meeting on the snowballing Southern white student movement and the forms it is taking. I consider it the most important development in the South within the past year and one of the most hopeful things that has happened in a long time. I do not want to give the impressions that I am in any sense trying to take basic credit for this because the credit belongs to the kids themselves. However I have tried to help and encourage where I could.

I do think that SCEF can justly take some of the over-all credit for this new development because of its pioneering work

with white students through the grant for work among white students. Public credit-seeking can be a bit disgusting, so we do not have to say all these things publicly. But certainly the SCEF board itself should take satisfaction in knowing that the sparks lit by this project have in many ways been responsible---sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly---for the growing fire among white students. By making the grant to SNCC when few people saw hope on white campuses, we kept the door open for white participation; we encouraged SNCC to seek white participation. These efforts sometimes seemed to be rather dismal failures. But the seeds planted are now coming to fruition. Much credit belongs to Bob Zellner who paved the way on the project for two years, to Sam Shirah who took it over this year, and to Ed Hamlett who has been working with Sam in recent months and to many others who worked on their campuses, often against great odds.

Under Sam, the perspective of the project has changed and broadened. Originally we thought, because it was all that then seemed possible, of mobilizing a handful of white students to be the tokens---to insure that the movement was not all Negro but in at least a token way was black and white together. This year, as Sam has developed a new philosophy for the project in consultation with many other young people, it has become feasible to talk about organizing great numbers of white people--- not only to join the pro-integration picketlines but to work in related fields of academic freedom, civil liberties, etc. It has also become possible to talk of the more advanced of these students going into the white communities, as Negro students have gone into the Negro communities, to organize the white unemployed, the white disinherited and try to bring him into a joint movement with the civil rights movement. Sam and Ed will be able to discuss this perspective further.

I feel that the board can be proud of this project. SNCC is requesting that it be continued and expanded if possible. I urge that this be done and that in view of the vastly expanded possibilities we try to raise money for a larger grant. If a special descriptive piece of literature on what the project has done so far and what it plans to do would be helpful for such fund-raising, I will gladly volunteer to prepare such.

3. My other field of activity has of course been the Patriot. Because of the press of the above two things, plus other factors, the Patriot has sometimes got the short end of things this year and I have sometimes neglected it, getting in the last few months very much behind on time schedule. I also feel I have not kept up the quality as well as I would like. By this I mean I have not been able to make enough trips to get first-hand articles and do the needed job of interpreting today's movement.

I hope to correct both of these shortcomings in the coming months. I have a college student volunteer who is going to help me in the summer.

By fall we should be back in harness on the Patriot. I hope to go ahead on with the campaign started last fall to double the circulation so we can increase the frequency.

I would like to add that if I have devoted less time to SCEF in the past six months than I have done in previous years it is partly because I have been devoting more time to a community project in Louisville which I think will interest you, although it is not directly related to SCEF. This is the West End Community Council, a very promising campaign to try to keep the area in which we live (a large area 1000 blocks in size, housing 150,000 people) from becoming a ghetto. I have felt the need to do something about this for years and finally about a year ago decided that I could not continue trying to save the rest of the world while I did nothing to keep my own part of town from going to hell. The net result is that the Community Council has consumed great hunks of my time. Technically this is my "own time", but since I used to work for SCEF sort of 24 hours a day-like, this has made a difference. I do think I have gained valuable experience that may be useful to SCEF elsewhere. I see the growing ghettoization of cities as a key issue in the South. I would propose that as soon as feasible SCEF call a conference on segregated housing in the South and ways to fight it. This is a frontier---and SCEF should be on the frontiers. I enclose some copies of the brochure I wrote for the Louisville West End Community Council.

For the months immediately in the future, I can commit myself to the following work: Getting the Patriot back on schedule, writing a new descriptive brochure about SCEF, writing a pamphlet on the SCEF case (which I think has to be separate from the descriptive piece) writing some articles for other publications on the SCEF case, and writing a descriptive piece on the white student project if this is needed. I can also attempt some traveling, but I am not sure how much.

I have made a copy of the recommendations made at a staff meeting last summer because they seem to me still valid and the crisis of the past year has prevented full discussion of them. Many are simply a formal statement of what has always been SCEF policy. At this time I would like to call attention especially to Point No 2 in this program---assisting in interpretation of the integration movement to the general public through brochures and leaflets etc., and to suggest that Nashville, where a movement now boils, might be a good place to try this. I urge that the possibility be discussed with our board member, C.T. Vivian, who is working in Nashville for SCLC and is deeply concerned that there be a program to reach more of the white community.