

March 29, 1965

Dear Friend

With the occurrence of the Mississippi Summer Project, the birth of the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley, the advent of community organizing in the North, and Southern Negro (Tuskegee) and white (SSOC) students, there has been a reawakening of students across the nation. Students who were merely concerned about "getting a degree" as quickly as possible, so that they could become "qualified" to take their places as "leaders" in the country. Now they are beginning to redefine their roles in the process which shapes the political mold of the country.

Many of us are discovering that "education" cannot be seen as an isolated "ivory tower" experience, which can only become irrelevant because of the nature of the isolation. We have found that we are learning and becoming "qualified" by acting out those things in which we deeply believe.

More students are finding that their destinies are intimately related to those of the people in poor communities around the nation. Students are finding that they too must ask the question "who makes the decisions which govern my life". They are answering the question, "how should students relate to problems and quandries of the larger community" with the act of servicing that community and discovering in the process that they are servicing themselves in a more complete way than could have they were they to spend four straight years in school.

The country is now in a time of extraordinary political activity. It is in a time of new concepts, new definitions and new forces which are seeking to find ways in which we may all live more meaningful lives, the rich as well as the poor, the workers as well as the students.

The energies of students must be used in political activity if the country is not only to change but also to grow.

We are inviting you to participate in a series of workshops centered around the issues of what activities students can become apart of and initiate as a means of taking a place in the shaping of the political face of the country.

On the 15th and 16th of April, (the 2 days preceding the protest Vietnam March) in Washington D.C. the following discussions will involve people representing SNCC, SDS, SSOC, NSM, FSM, and FDP.

1) FDP Workshops

Members of the Freedom Democratic Party and some of those who have been helping to organize it will be leading discussions and issuing information to those of you who are interested in marshalling support for the Congressional Challenge on your return to your home states.

2) Voting Bill Workshops

Because we see the proposed voting bill as a key factor in the future of the Civil Rights movement. People who are well informed as to the meaning of the bill will offer their information. People from Mississippi and other areas of the deep South will explain exactly what the bill means to them. People participating may also be interested in discussing the significance of the proposed bill to the political climate of the country. It is our feeling that people can make a very positive contribution to the movement by becoming informed about the bill and spreading the information in their communities.

3) Community Organizing Workshops

The staffs of SNCC, ERAP, NSM, etc. will answer questions about their experience. They will discuss programs for those who are interested in summer work or who are considering leaving school for a year or more in order to organize.

4) Campus Organizing Workshop

Some of the people who have been active in raising issues on their own campuses will lead discussions about the possibilities of others initiating action around various issues on their own campuses.

Our hope is that we can provide a forum for the growing number of students who are interested in becoming a part of the kind of political activity which calls for deep commitment to social change.

Those of us who will be coordinating the workshops in Washington will be investigating the possibilities of housing, but you should come prepared to pay for and possibly find your own housing. The workshops are open and everyone who is interested is invited, so please pass this letter on.

For information concerning time and place, you can call any of the organizations involved, (SSOC, FSM, SDS, NSM, Friends of SNCC or the D.C. SNCC office - 202-DU7-7445) in your areas.

Yours for Freedom