

I'm going to try to make the next Exec. Comm. meeting and bring this up for discussion if possible.

Sincerely,  
Howard

[September] 30, 1965

Dear Muriel:

This is in reply to your memo to "defunct executive committee members" asking for an explanation of why we have not been attending meetings (incidentally, the word "defunct" is a crushing blow, just by the sound of it!).

I have tried in the past to attend as many executive meetings as I could. The problem is, I have a job teaching, and can't get away as often as I would like. What I usually do is call off my classes for a day or two and try to squeeze in some time for the executive committee meeting. It's easier for me if the meetings take place on the weekends, so I don't miss that many classes; when they start on Monday it's hard. Yet, I certainly wouldn't suggest changing meeting times just to suit me, because I am not really a working member of the Executive Committee in the way that others are. My work consists of writing about the Movement, speaking in various parts of the country about it -- performing, in other words, a secondary and supporting role rather than the primary work that is being done by staff people.

Another fact which has particularly affected me lately is that, knowing SNCC's hard-pressed financial condition, I have been hesitant to ask for travel funds to fly me to a meeting and back. Frankly, considering what money can be used for (like paying staff salaries), I don't think my presence is worth that kind of money. Still, I may take your P.S. seriously if you want me to.

In the past, Miss Baker and I have sometimes tried to work it out (since she too can't make too many meetings) so we take turns attending the Executive Committee meetings. Recently we haven't done this, but maybe we'll try again. Now I can't speak for Miss Baker, but let me say for myself that I don't think of myself as a decision-making member of the Executive Committee even though technically I'm a member of the Committee. That is, I don't feel ~~xxx~~ I have the right to make decisions for people in the field, as far away as I am from it right now. As an "advisor" I see my job as mainly working in the field of education.

Which brings me to a suggestion: would it be a good idea to have some Executive Committee meeting or a purely educational session -- that is, no immediate personnel, finances, etc. -- but maybe three or four sessions (bringing in people from outside to participate) on economics and politics, and where we head in its policies on economic change, politics, etc. Is the Movement at a turning point now, where we should get attention (look at LA-Watts) and we should as a result be changing society fundamentally? How do Unions & Poor Peoples Corporations relate to change? How does the FDP relate to a new political party?