

[1]
Oxford, Ohio June 25

Somerville

Dear Mrs. M:

I wonder as I begin this letter if I have told you that I will be part of the "invasion" of Mississippi this summer. I think not, because I didn't see you in the ten days I was home. In any case, I am going. And so I have a favor to ask of you.

As I imagine you know - the news coverage of our Project has been very fair and complete - we are going down, perhaps 800 of us, to work in the Negro communities of Mississippi. The work is threefold:

First: we want to register voters. For a number of reasons, the danger and difficulty of registration are so great that in most instances we will be registering for the so called Freedom Democratic Party with our own forms and our own registrars in every county. This will at least be helpful in the push to seat the Freedom Democratic Party at the Convention.

Second, we want to set upilot community centers for the National Council of Churches. The Council has committed over \$250,000 to build and staff community centers all across the delta region of the state, where the Negro population is highest (2/3), and poorest. We shall be working out limited centers in as many of the towns as we can (i.e. where we have hope they won't be bombed right away) and depending on our reports, the NCC will takeover them in the fall.

Finally, we will set up Freedom Schools in conjunction with the community centers. These schools are somewhat schizophrenic but as I read through the hundreds of pages of curriculum prepared for us I begin to see the possibility of union(?) by clever teaching. You see, we want to work to alleviate cultural and academic deprivation and at the same time to teach questioning of what they are fed by pointing out alternatives to their present status. Thus, for instance, when we try to teach American History (which I shall be doing, God willing), we will concentrate on aspects which have been omitted or distorted in the regular Negro state controlled schools i.e. the place of the Negro in

history. And as we discuss the historical reasons behind the present reality, I hope we will give ~~xxx~~ an understanding of the present and the possibility - and hope- for improvement.

I hope I'm not boring you with all this, but I want to make clear what we are and what we aren't doing. We are not going to integrate, to agitate, to demonstrate; to fill the jails, embarrass the gov't, or being on even a confrontation. "e hope to teach in our area (just as others hope to do their respective wok) and as one of our chief teachers said yesterday, I can say "I'm going, willing to take a risk, but if I thought there was simply no possibility of actual learning, I'd go right back to Philadelphia".

But there are risks. And we are aware of them. The three lost men, various arrests and beatings attest to it. I'm enclosing this afternoon's report - we get this once or twice a day. We don't want Fed'l troops to bring all activity to a halt, but neither do we (I especially) want to share the fate of my three lost co-workers. The thing we are hoping for is protection (even though necessarily on a limited scale)by out of state, non-southern FBI agents and Fed'l marshalls. The investigation going on now is only a post-mortem in one county. And for this it took 36 hours of constant pressure furing which the local FBI and state police refused to budge. Thirty six hours can lose our lives.

So finally, the favor I'm asking of you is to use a little pressure for us if you have the time to do so. What I hoped was that you could perhaps get a bit of Mrs. D's ear and get her to put a little more pressure on. Anything you could do along this line I would very deeply appreciate. I do want to be able to teach in Mississippi; this work, as our SNCC chairman for Miss., Robert Moses, said yesterday, can be done neither in jail nor in the grave.

I'm sorry to have taken up your time; I hope that you will have a bit more to devote to us. I've left your name among those who should be contacted in an emergency in which I'm involved; I hope you won't mind. In case you'd like to talk to me about this, I'm going to ask my

mother to call you. If you want to talk to me, she'll let me know and I'll give you a call.

I feel rather apologetic about asking you to do this; 2 weeks ago I would not have done it. Today, in the face of what is actually beginning to scare me quite solidly I can do it easily. Any help you can lend will be appreciated. My address -----.

I'd be very glad to hear from you no matter what you can or can't do for us directly. I'll also be looking forward to seeing you when I get back, and indeed looking forward to getting back.

My best,

Chips