

[Believed to be October 1965]

ms2 25/116

Thursday, October something or other

dear cyn,

good talking with you--and to hear that some folks in n.y. are reacting the same way we are out here to the nonsense that is called the new sncc office in atlanta. my own feeling is that i'd like to get a group of field people together and go to atlanta and have a sit-in there.

impression from here of sncc and the movement is that we are in deep trouble. the move back into mississippi looks to me like an attempt to make fdp dependent on sncc. the failure to give staff support to mflu is serious to me. the impression i get of mississippi is that state mfdp has little to do with what goes on in the county rdsp committees and that in some cases the good people at the county level now bypass the fdp preferring to be in another form of organization. add to that the complications of the mlsa. demo. conf., the c.d.g.m., the war in vietnam and what we're supposed to do about it and there's a whole lot of problems. these are reflected in the tightening up that seems to be going on inside--in part as a response to these external pressures, in part because of the view that that's how a tough militant organization is supposed to act. it seems to me that sncc is in the process of changing from a band of organizers who sought to find organizational forms which could release the issues and leadership potential of the people of the black belt to an organization that itself seeks to raise those issues and provide that leadership, with the base of the people in the black belt. americus, with the maids union, the student union, etc. seemed to be an exception, but s.c.l.c. finished that. somehow the notion that we would build a coalition of the sharecroppers and daylaborers, the domestics and the cooks, the farmers, yes, and some of the preachers, teachers and businessmen seems to be gone. the symbol that we, sncc, are that new official leadership is in the edifice-office that now rises in atlanta. now when stephens-hamer-blackwell-johnson-and-who-else come to atlanta they can take their hats off and bow a little and say "i'd like to speak to massah snick, please, suh." and that's freedom. more likely, however, is that they'll soon stop coming to atlanta. for if that is the only alternative we have to offer, then you might as well go first cabin and go with sclc. the question is whether or not we can reclaim the organization before this process is irreversible. that one is hard to answer from here. i'd like to propose that we seriously start talking about that. i don't think the answer is in a debate on structure. what i do think is that we need to talk with forman and a group of us ask him to move into the field, to open up a new project, to sink his roots back into the community, to get away from the wats line; the same for some of the other folks who have become accustomed to the office, the telephone delivered order, the use of stop payment of checks as a way to solve problems, etc., etc. those, by the way, i find the inevitable accompaniments of offices and bureaus; and, offices and bureaus are generally needed if one is interested in building an organization that has some power. so i think we need to rotate people in and out of the bureaus and offices--and, if we can't convince them that they ought to do this for the health of the whole organization, then maybe we'll have to vote them to do it.

to change the subject to another problem of the organization and the movement, that of the drinkers-floaters. i've got a good friend of mine drafting a proposal for a youth camp. it would be kind of a model society. people would go away there for a three-six month period. they would work, play, learn, etc. together. they would also run the place. for example, if there were 20 cabins and they all had about 15 people in them, each cabin would be a decision-making group on how the cabin was organized. then everyone would organize according to work that had to be done: cooking, meal planning, budgeting, etc., etc. there would be a minimum staff of guys highly skilled in working with people who suffer from battle fatigue. maybe some psychiatrists who dealt with battle fatigued soldiers in w.w. ii or the korean war. i've been talking to some people about funding this and i think it could be done. i'll have this, i hope mineed, for staff meeting.

misc.: would you please make sure that the separately mailed questionnaire thing is

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passed around to the people who can answer the questions AND PLEASE TRY TO GET THE ANSWERS BACK TO US BEFORE OCT. 23. also; i wrote and said that ron bridgeforth wanted to go on leave and that he should be taken off payroll and that carolyn egan, who worked last summer in greenwood, should go on payroll at \$50 per week as administrative secretary out here. carolyn doesn't seem to be receiving any money from you all.

will you also ask the finance committee if it will put george ballis on staff out here. he will be covering the san joaquin valley for s.n.c.c., which means relations with farm workers association, migrant ministry, mendota-firebaugh firefighters poverty fighters, welfare problems in the valley, a.s.c.s. elections, water-district problems, etc. ballis needs \$50 a week. Since he has a wife and two kids, he needs the money regularly. we will try to get him onto an interim arrangement as soon as possible, so you should send his check to this address and we will pay him the \$50. when you don't have money, we'll pay him somehow from out here since he has to receive the money cause of family and all that.

a question asked with some hesitation: what's all this about a whole lot of staff people being "dropped" from staff? and, since we're about it, where is bob parris and what is he doing?

ANOTHER BIG FAVOR: WOULD YOU WANDER THROUGH THE FILES, THE BACK MINEOGRAPH ROOM, AND IMPROPER ELSE YOU MIGHT FIND THINGS AND DIG UP ONE OF EVERYTHING THAT ANYONE IN SNCC HAS EVER WRITTEN ABOUT ANYTHING. WE NEED THINGS TO RUN IN THE MOVEMENT AND THE KEY LIST MAILING. ALSO ANYTHING WRITTEN BY LOCAL FOLKS WOULD BE GREAT TOO.

guess that's about all for now. feel free to show the above and aforementioned around. i hope we can get some discussion going on all this.

the following people are on staff here; as far as i'm concerned all of them can come to staff meeting if they want to. you can pass this on to whoever is in charge of rooms and reservations: Tim Ramsay, Danny Brown, JoAnn Oiman, Roy Ballard--interne program, Haight-Ashbury project. Ron Bridgeforth, Frank Ciecioroka, Bobbi Ciecioroka--on leave or in the process of coming back on staff. Carolyn Egan, Mike Miller, Danny Benson--now working in sncc things. Terry Cannon, Jeanne Hume, Ellen Estrin--communications department. Harry Brill--research department. George Ballis--our man in the valley. some of these people don't plan to come: Ramsay, Oiman, Bridgeforth, Benson, Estrin, Brill definitely won't be coming. Others might not be coming, like Brown, Cieciorokas, Ballard, Benson, Cannon, Hume, Ballis. Which leaves me, who is going to come.

please let me know if you have plans to come out here for a week, two, forever, for a day or two, etc.

love, freedom, and all those things,

mike

MIKE MILLER
Bay Area Area of
Friends of
SNCC