

BRUCE HARTFORD  
802 1ST AVE.  
SELMA ALABAMA

Spring 66

MR. R.T. BLACKWELL

I AM SORRY THAT WE DID NOT GET A CHANCE TO TALK AT THE WORKSHOP, BUT THAT THE WAY IT GOES. THERE ARE A COUPLE OF THINGS THAT I WANTED TO MENTION TO YOU AND SO I AM GOING TO LET YOU "WRAP THEM UP" BY MAIL, SO TO SPEAK. THE FIRST THING IS THAT ENCLOSED IN THIS LETTER IS A CARD PUT OUT BY ASSEMBLYMAN MERVIN DYMALLY OF CALIF. HE IS THE ASSEMBLYMAN FOR THE LOS ANGELES GHETTO. HE USES THE CARD BOTH AS A CAMPAIGN TECHNIQUE AND AS A GIMMICK TO ENCOURAGE VOTER REGISTRATION. I WANTED YOU TO SEE IT IN CASE YOU THOUGHT THAT IT MIGHT BE A GOOD GIMMICK FOR ALABAMA.

I HAVE FELT FOR A LONG TIME THAT ONE OF THE LIMITING FACTORS IN OUR WORK IS THAT FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES THE ONLY WAY WE HAVE OF COMMUNICATING TO THE PEOPLE THAT WE ARE WORKING WITH IS VERBALLY. IT HAS SEEMED TO ME THAT FILMS SHOULD BE USED TO MUCH GREATER ADVANTAGE THEN THEY ARE NOW. ONE OF THE PROBLEMS HOWEVER IS THAT THE FILMS THAT WE HAVE ARE DOCUMENTARIES. I DON'T THINK THAT DOCUMENTARIES ARE COMPLETELY ADEQUATE BECAUSE IN EVERY ONE FOR SOME REASON SOME OF THE ESSENCE OF THE MOVEMENT IS LOST. THAT IS THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THE NATURE OF DOCUMENTARIES THAT MAKES IT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO PROVIDE THE VIEWER WITH A COMPLETE PICTURE OF THE MOVEMENT. I THINK WHAT IS LACKING IS THE EMOTION OF THE MOVEMENT, WHICH TO ME, IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT THEN WHO DID WHAT WHEN. ANYWAY ALL THAT WAS TO LEAD UP TO THIS. WHILE I WAS IN L.A. I SAW A MOVIE CALLED "SALT OF THE EARTH". THIS WAS A MOVIE MADE IN 1950 ABOUT A ZINC MINERS STRIKE IN NEW MEXICO BY A LARGELY MEXICAN-AMERICAN UNION. MOST OF THE ACTORS WERE THE PEOPLE WHO TOOK PART IN THE ACTUAL STRIKE ALTHOUGH THERE WERE A FEW PROFESSIONAL ACTORS. THE STRIKERS BASICALLY WERE STRIKING FOR EQUALITY AND THEY FACED THE SAME OPPOSITION THAT THE MOVEMENT IN ALABAMA HAS FACED, FROM TEAR GAS AND BEATINGS, AND JAILINGS, TO TOMS AND FAMILY PROBLEMS, AND "BLACK NATIONALISM". THIS PICTURE DID SOMETHING THAT NO OTHER PICTURE I HAVE EVER SEEN HAS DONE AND THAT IS CAPTURE THE FULL ESSENCE OF THE MOVEMENT. IT IS ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFULL AND MOVING PICTURES IT HAS EVER BEEN MY PRIVILEGE TO SEE. AS I WATCHED IT I BECAME CONVINCED THAT IT WOULD BE FANTASTICALLY VALUABLE TO SHOW THIS FILM IN THE SOUTH. I HAVE MADE CONTACT WITH SOME OF THE PEOPLE CONCERNED WITH THE PICTURE AND THERE IS A CHANCE THAT THEY MIGHT LET US HAVE A COPY FOR FREE SHOWINGS IN THE SOUTH. HOWEVER I DID NOT WANT TO GO ANY FURTHER UNTILL I HAVE TALKED TO YOU AND ALSO EXPLAINED THE DISADVANTAGES OF SHOWING THE MOVIE. MANY OF THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING THE MOVIE WERE COMMUNISTS (THE DIRECTOR WAS ONE OF THE "HOLLYWOOD TEN" I BELIEVE). WHEN THE MOVIE WAS MADE IN 1950 THE AMERICAN LEGION SAID THAT IT WAS COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA AND THEY MOUNTED SUCH A CAMPAIGN AGAINST IT THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO SHOW THE FILM. FOR THE LAST 15 YEARS THERE HAS BEEN COURT CASES ABOUT IT AND THEY ARE FINALLY ABLE TO SHOW THE FILM ALTHOUGH FEW THEATRES WILL TAKE IT. EVEN TODAY THE PRESSURE AGAINST IT IS STRONG. EVEN SO, I THINK THAT IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO SHOW IN THE SOUTH, BECAUSE IT IS A TRUE PICTURE AND FROM WHAT I KNOW OF THE STRIKE ACCURATE.

YOURS

BRUCE HARTFORD