

May 29, 1965

Dear Phil,

We had an extremely interesting, informative, and depressing house guest for the past three days. Nancy Cooper has been with SNCC for a couple of years. She worked for a while in Miss and has come to SWGa this summer to start a "Residential Freedom School" which will run for three weeks in Chicago and three weeks in Cordele, Ga - utilizing Northern resource people while in Chi and involving ghetto kids from Chi, Detroit, NY and also kids from the rural south - and then they will all come down to Cordele for the next three weeks. Just in terms of letting Miss kids know where its at in Chicago by putting them with kids from similar backgrounds (not three weeks with a nice white middle class family in Highland Park) will be rewarding in itself, but the school promises a whole lot more. But she is very very tired and disolutioned, and articulated what I really know but hate to admit to myself. That is that SNCC, tho once revolutionary, really isnt any more. That is it has been corrupted by the "fuhd raising" and the "personalities" who sound more like Roy Wilkâns every day. She told me about the arguments about involving themselves in the FSM and how a few guys like Ivanhoe and Cobb saw this and pushed for it but a lot of others were ~~ex~~ very agaisst it. She says that Fœeman has reached a point where any criticism of SNCC or tactics is a personal blow at ~~he~~ him; that Ivanhoe is hopelessly confused at this point having had to choose between friends and organization; that the Miss people do not work as no one can come up with any inspiring program - that everyone really feels that the Challenge is doomed (Martin probably wont even get a chance to sell it out). One of the worst drains is that caused by the Federal Programs. That there is strong grassroot feeling against staying away from all this bullshit like Head Start as it only dissipates energy - but others want ~~an~~ it and, like radicalizing King, want to radicalize the Federal war on poverty. Anyhow I got more insights into SNCC in these three days than I have had in ~~a~~ years. She had great things to say about Julian Bond's campaign - about how they got 10 out of 40 white votes (poor white housing project ~~an~~ edge of his district). Bond won the primary in Atlanta to the State House of Reps. He has some fantastic ideas like every day bringing another person from his district to sit in his seat and see that one man cant do anything to bring about change - and if they wont let local folks sit in his chair, then he will sit in the galary with them. They also get to appoint pages, who are the sons of wealthy cats (except for an accasional orphan) but Bond plans to bring in a different page each day - the nastiest dirty kid he can find in his district. Anyhow, alot of what Nancy says is very depressing - like some of the best people have just gotten disgusted and ~~is~~ left like Mendy Samstein who worked in M,ss for a couple of years and is now working for the Teamsters in St.Louis; she said alot more would leave, including herself, butthey just dont know where to go and the fear of isolation is overwhelming.

While this is in my mind. Please send the newsletter to Bob Cover 111 1937 Hall Princeton, New Jersey. Please put a notes in with the first one explaining what its all about; as I forgot to mention that I would have it ~~h~~ sent to ~~hm~~ him. ~~Xen~~ I think I told you about him once before - he might be at Berkeley next year.

Also, Despite Everything is certainly getting some wierd audiences. Jack Pickering used the last issue as a text in a church in Englewood, NJ in a "Church and Community" series. He is very impressed with Despite. He edits Rights, the ECLC magazine.

Dear Friends;

I shouldn't put these off for two weeks as too much happens in between and I tend to want to leave stuff out. The reason why it wasn't written last weekend was that Wendy, CB, Carol and I went to Panama City, Florida. Which was a really great vacation. They have a State Park Beach which is integrated now (tho there were no other Negroes on the beach but were all over on the formerly segregated beach) and it is a beautiful place. CB has a cousin who just graduated law school a couple of years ago and is practicing law there, so this might give me an excuse to get down again this summer. In Albany it is unbearably hot and there is no place to swim, except sand pits and the like. Well, let me try to sort the week out.

At the very beginning of last week we had another police brutality case. A young guy and his wife from one of the rural counties had gone to visit her aunt in Omega, Ga (a tiny place south of here). It was their third wedding anniversary. Anyhow the husband had ~~driving~~ driven a family to Tifton to do some shopping and he got back to the Aunt's house about midnight. He parked the car and started in to get his wife and babies when the town's only cop drove up behind him and told him, "nigger, move that car". So he got back in and moved it down the road a few feet, then got out and went over to the cop car and asked him why the cop told him to move it as he was only going into the house to pick up his wife and children. The cop jumped out of his car with a blackjack in his hand, said "you must be one of them bad niggers" and beat him with the blackjack over the head. Then he pulled his pistol and shot at the guy, but missed, and then hit him in the head with it opening up a big gash. The guy staggered over to his aunt's house, bleeding profusely. His wife came out and started to clean off his head but the cop came over and made him get in the car and took him to the jail. He held him several hours - he was unconscious during this time - and wouldn't let anyone see him until they paid a \$50 (we haven't figured out whether this was bond or fine). The white farmer who he works for came over to the jail and asked the cop what the trouble was and whether he was drunk or disorderly. The cop said he wasn't drunk or disorderly, but "he had the road blocked so I hit him". The victim of all of this came in to see us a few days afterward; the gash in his head was still oozing. We called the FBI who came over and took his statement. It was interesting to see that they went into considerable detail with him, his wife, and the father who were witnesses, took pictures, etc. They seemed to listen with much more interest than I have seen them evidence in this past. It is possible that all that crap about when Martin L King said that the SWGA FBI were ~~bastards~~ indifferent crackers and Hoover called him a notorious liar has had some repercussions down here. But the problem here is that really nothing can be done in a situation like this and this damn cop has a license to go on beating and killing Negroes whenever he gets in the mood. The guy called up a couple of days later to say that he was passing through ~~that~~ Omega on his way somewhere else and the cop pulled him over and told him never to come into Omega again. As I started to say, there is really nothing that can be done here. The FBI will file their investigation with the Justice Department and that will be the end of it. ~~The~~ About a month ago they brought ~~action~~ a criminal action against a Sheriff ~~in~~ from around Valdosta, Ga. for beating up a prisoner, but of course this guy was white. The other alternative since the Federal Govt won't bring criminal charges against these racist police is for us to bring a civil suit. But these suits cost a hell of a lot of ~~money~~ money just to get into court and this guy ~~is~~ doesn't have that kind of money. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund is very adamant about not ~~taking~~ bringing civil rights damage actions

even tho CB has been telling them for years that this is the only way to stop these racist cops. But he isn't telling them anything that most of them ~~are~~ don't already know - but I guess it's a "policy" decision as private suits against cops don't bring in the publicity of a school desegregation, especially since you lose these cases; and you can't raise money on cases you lose. They have let CB bring a couple but it was like pulling teeth each time. Anyhow that's where it's at if you are black in the South. He really can't go back to Omega Georgia because that Cracker has got it in his head that he's a "smart nigger" and he might just kill him the next time he sees him and if he did nothing would be done about it. The only thing that this guy can figure might have caused this was about a year ago there were some demonstrations in Tifton around the Civil Rights Act - accommodations testing, and so he brought his laundry into the white part of the only laundromat in Omega (the "colored" machines