

5/11/68

Dear Matt,

Work essential to the trip is stacked so high I may not complete all of it before I leave. If I do not bring copies all the data on the NSRP, remind me and I'll mail it after my return. I will have a few pictures you may find interesting.

However, I take it you may not be there if you have joined the march and stay through it. That may be complicating in another way that I'll explain in more detail in person.

Nor was my sole purpose to dodge Bringuier. That I want to do for only a brief period. I very much want to sue him. For this I need a lawyer, and I have no funds. I do not know whether, if we win, as I think undoubtedly, there will be enough to repay the lawyer. If Jeanine, who I presume will open this in your absence, knows any to whom I might talk, I'd like to know.

It is fortunate you cannot "entertain", for then I'd have to be "entertained", which would frustrate the purpose of my trip. You have an idea how I work. But your words take me back to my youth, when I had a small apartment near the Capitol and ran an overcrowded hotel, putting up a variety of friends and strangers ranging from chorus girls to Congressmen, one of whom lived regularly with me.

One thing has from the first interested me: do you have any reason for believing there might be official involvement, say of the CIA. I have informal information I cannot confirm that Ray is in Brazil, having flown there immediately and having been paid en route, and that the FBI has gotten the CIA in on it. That, I fear, would guarantee the result.

Aside from motivating and mobilizing Negroes, I am inclined to not favor an all-Negro Committee of Inquiry. King was not only a Negro. He spoke not only for Negroes. He was a leader of not only Negroes. The loss is not only that of black people. And the responsibility certainly is not. To exclude whites from an effort to search for the cause and his killer is to deny them the right of seeking absolution, the right of making a meaningful gesture of solidarity and whites can make possible what the Negroes cannot. I fear, above all, the involvement of the professional Negroes like the Rowans and Tomaxes, and what a tragedy that would be. By now you know their doctrine. Have you not seen it on the Kennedy assassination and explanation. Measuring their interest, however, is another and essential matter.

Perhaps it is too early to talk of publication, but I think not. I think it is too early to plan all the forms of publication. For one thing, all your work should be with an eye on ultimate publication. You must find the time to keep adequate records, for you will find, as time goes on, that memory fails. Busy as Vince also is, if his notes are abbreviated, try and get him to type them up in as full a form as he can. Better, although ultimately it takes more time, do what you did with me and have backup tapes stashed around. You can use for me this all the time. I have one machine near the phone at home and carry another with me whenever I am in N.O. Use even Jeanine for this, at home. I think you will find that your best protection, your best chance for survival, is to have so much accumulated and to the knowledge of those who might want harm to come to you that they dare not risk that harm for fear of the attention it would earn to what you have, for which you have not gotten attention and might not be able to. Be as public about it as you can. That also is a measure of protection to those to whom you speak.

My tentative plan is to arrive about 5/18 and stay for up to but probably less than two weeks. Part of this time, if I can swing it, I should be in a motel. Solvency is a problem I am familiar with.

~~XXXXXXXX~~ To your success! Best,

315 Pine Street
New Orleans, La. 70118
May 9, 1968

Dear Harold:

This will have to be a very brief reply to your two letters. I am off bright and early tomorrow to join the poor people's march.

First of all, please feel welcome to stay with us at any time and for any length of time you feel necessary. Don't wait until you're dodging Bringuier for an excuse. If you want to make my place your permanent headquarters in New Orleans that would be wonderful. As Ruiz Théranez (the guy ~~from~~ from New Mexico who tried to claim a town under an old treaty ceding it to Mexicans) said to me last week, "There are few enough good people in the world. We must stick together and help each other." You have to understand (as I'm sure you do) that we are busy most of the time & don't have the time or energy to "entertain" guests in the middle class manner, but if you want to live with us as one of the family without special considerations or privileges, I want you to feel most welcome. That goes for when I'm out of town as well. You can have a key & feel free to come & go.

I would be most interested in any material on the N.S.R.P. you can provide. I think it is extremely relevant to the investigation.

It's too early to talk about publication now. We need to do much more solid digging first. At the moment I am still trying to get Jim Lawson, the most powerful movement person in Memphis, and a fine person, to move aggressively to form a national NEGRO committee of inquiry. When this is accomplished, I can get financial backing to carry on the inquiry. Without that, it would be very difficult, and also I want to see if Negroes are really interested enough to get out and form that organization on their own. Meanwhile, Dick Billings (if not LIFE) continues to show interest, and the Times of London is still a good prospect for backing and publication. If these publications fall through we can think about Ramparts, Paralax et.al. Meantime I'm trying to keep the issue alive in Memphis, stay alive and solvent myself and maintain the interest of those people I've talked to. It's damn frustrating not to be able to plunge right in, but I think a committee will come to life in the next week or so, and then the way will be clearer.

I don't know if I've covered everything. But I have to stop. Please stay with us....and send those files if you can.

Cordially,

