

Undated, but rec'd about Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> 1962



# Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

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Dear Leko,

I am totally confused. Did I write you and thank you for the package you sent, the heavenly package? If not, many, many, thanks. It came in marvelously handy, since we were working desperately hard that week on a voter registration drive here in Albany, and I was feeling kind of coldy, so we didn't have much time to market and cook. We've been having several all-night or most-of-the-night staff meetings. One night after a mass meeting in the Terrell tent, we came piling into town and started a staff meeting at about 1:00 AM in a freezing cold house. Everyone felt much better after we had some of your soup. MUCH BETTER.

These staff meetings would probably interest you a great deal, by the way. Not only do we plan strategy, but since we work so closely, they tend toward the critical, analytical and ~~xxx~~ reassuring. Frustration's probably the most frequently voiced word. Frustration because people in the counties still call white staff members "Bossman", "Yassuh", or "Yesman". Frustration because people aren't registering. Frustration because the courts won't take action, or because the Justice Dept. courteously takes our reports but never does more than "investigate." And then all the frustration caused by the fact that we are all young people in a very inhibiting situation (in some senses). For instance, last night we gave Penny Patch a going away party. Had to break up the part at ten, because the cops were watching the place where we held it. The strictness with which we try to live is unusual anywhere, but in a group as spirited and alive as this one, it is, as Chico says, "flustrating".

Working in teams of two in the counties, the boys have been forced to deal with one another more closely than they've probably ever dealt with anyone, even their families. Whether one of them takes a car for an early date becomes a matter of group decision. Will the cops catch him? Will the politics of the town take advantage of this one boy's date with a girl and make an issue of it? (that one happens all the time). Pretty soon someone brings up the boys' attitudes toward one another, and we could be talking straight through until the next morning. We have two teams of boys, each composed of a Negro and a white. One team, Chco and Jack, is made up of a white boy from Vermonst, Jack, who has never really known Negroes before, but who is a very thoughtful and idealistic person. The other boy, Chico, has had a free ticket into the civil rights struggle because he is Negro; Chico has never thought much about what he's doing and sees his actions in newspaper release terms. These two clash not only because Chco is more happy go lucky than Jack, but also because Jack, a prep school boy, can not accept the fact that Chico doesn't know how to attack a thought the way Jack does, that thrashing out an idea may be something Chico has never been exposed to before. Jack doesn't realize that he's been trained to be a rational man. On the other hand, Chico is a natural for the job, and can move into anyone's front yard with much more natural skill than Jack, even if he hasn't been trained. I'm afraid Jack feels it's WRONG that Chico has gotten this ability for free. So it goes for all of us, all kinds of subtle things that might not matter ordinarily, but which count down here.

After two months of working together, we started kidding around the other day, and began doing imitations of one another. We spent two hours of just clowning this way, but it was amazing how much we know about one another that came out in that two hours. Text books call it role playing, I guess, but it was purely spontaneous, after a night of what Sherrod calls "throwing one another's insides on the table and probing."

I have to get back to work now, Leko. OH! OH! I forgot. I was working last week in an office down the street, where they're trying to set up a voter registration drive, when someone came running in with your manila envelope. With one hand still on the canvasser's data sheets, and half my mind on the plans for the next day, I opened it by mistake, NOT HAVING READ THE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE ENVELOPE. VERY DUMB, I'M SORRY. I DID manage to stop before I opened the package, but the card and check were already out. THANK YOU! THANK YOU! I'm saving the Christmas package for for THE DAY, when we will probably be in Lee County, having dinner with one of the families there. We will be well taken care off, but I'll be glad to have a little of "up North" with me, too.

Love,

Yacht.