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Jim Lemby to Jim, 14 November 1956

Jim Lemby

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November 14, 1956

Dear Jim:

It was good to hear your comments about the Mississippi situation, but somewhat distressing at the same time. I still have a strong regard for the state and for Ole Miss and I am unhappy that things are moving as they seem to be going.

Last night I talked to B.I. Wiley and he gave some more information about the general situation. At the same time, he told me that he was not coming to Durham, primarily because his son was ill with asthma and he was needed at home.

On the strength of his suggestion, I am sending this letter to the headquarters hotel and hope it reaches you. The reason I am not able to be at Durham is not because of the nature of the people, but the fact that the Southern Econ. meeting is in session at Raleigh and I will be there.

The enclosed sheets are only a rough effort to put something on paper so some of us could discuss the matter more easily. Some of my colleagues here tell me that the statement doesn't say anything and I tend to agree. It has been altered from my original position somewhat and is not clear. With it as a point of departure however, I would like for you to discuss the basic idea with some of the other people there, leaving out names and places unless you know they won't talk and thus cause trouble ahead of time. I have no desire to hide, but I don't want a report to get out that I am building up a cabal or anything else, and thus destroy the possibility of some action. As soon as you can, I would appreciate your views about the present document and any substitute you may have in mind.

Wiley thought well of the idea, but felt that the approach should be a kind of academic freedom in disguise. He thought that an appeal to the right for any man to dissent from the general view might receive attention. There seems to be a quotation from Thomas Jefferson which goes to the heart of this matter which B.I. likes, and if his rendition was accurate, I like it too. This approach, if skillfully done, need not say anything about segregation, but there would be ample evidence of the true intent of such a statement.

If you dislike any or all of this, leave it alone and then tell me so sometime later. I don't have any concrete plans as you see, but am trying to find a way to get myself on record as opposed to what I seem to see happening in a land which should know better, but doesn't.

I will be talking to some of the people at Raleigh and they may have some suggestions or comments and if so we may be able to put something together out of the entire group.

clandestinely yours,

