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To whom it may concern in S.D.S.

I am, herewith, (and for some unknown and probably masochistic reason) inclosing this years dues. It is really very stupid of me to send you this money as I really don't have \$3 to throw away on nothing. Nothing you ask? Why did he say nothing? All right so I'll tell you already. To begin with I have been a member for exactly 14 months and in all this time I have received but three things from S.D.S.. The first was a membership card, which, while it had done me no good has done me some harm---you try to explain about S.D.S. to the high sheriff of Marengo County when he notices that you have an S.D.S. membership card (he was going through me wallet at the time), this was an embarrassing request (well it wasn't actually a request) because in the first place I did not want to upset him further and in the second place I really didn't know a hell of a lot about S.D.S. The only thing that I had read by S.D.S. was what is printed on the membership card (very interesting I assure you, but it does leave you with a few questions). The only other information I had was what I was told by an S.D.S. worker (whom I only know by the initials J.S. which he affixed to my membership card after writing somebody else's name on the line for president) whom I met on a train going from New Haven Conn. to New York. The sheriff I am sorry to say was not completely satisfied with my valiant (but weak) attempts to explain about S.D.S. and he decided to pursue that and other subjects in the comfort of his place of work to which we speedily went. ---However I digress, the second thing that I received from S.D.S. were some buttons that said "A FREE UNIVERSITY IN A FREE SOCIETY". These I am happy to say did me no harm (the Selma University students who I gave the buttons to, however, got screwed royally, all of them eventually finding it necessary to continue their education elsewhere). The third thing that I received from S.D.S. was in answer to an inquiry I made in July as to why I had not received some of the things that the mysterious J.S. had promised me (like a bulletin, literature tell what S.D.S. is, discussion a la "participatory Democracy" of what was going on and the issues of the day, etc.) I received in reply--"Thought on Berkley" by Paul Goodman, a recruiting pamphlet for ERAP (?), "Our crises economy" by Ray Brown, "Letter to the New Left", C Wright Mills (I had read it), "The economics of Racism (the print job was so bad that the only thing that I could make out was that it was printed by CORE), The Survey and Community Organization (very interesting), Bibliography on the American Economy (the nearest library was 67 miles away and I was not allowed in), The Bruns Strike, 3 things on University reform, (All of which I thought were stuffy- no offense), America and the new era, Student Political Action, a speech by Noel Day (interesting), Will Negroes use guns? by Harlan Joye (yes they will, thank god), and finally a very nice letter from someone named Judy Pardun asking if I would be interested in writing about Community Organizing in Alabama. Still nothing about S.D.S. or a bulletin, or information about what S.D.S. is doing. And that was the last I ever heard (directly) from S.D.S.

When the mysterious J.S. was talking to me about S.D.S. he particularly stressed that the organization was run by "participatory democracy" (A favorite phrase of his, as I recall). Having just resigned as a CORE task force worker this was of great interest to me. Unfortunately over the past year I have not had the opportunity or information to "participate" in fact I do not know if there has ever been any elections.

A couple of months ago I had to leave Alabama to attend a batch of sit-in trials resulting from demonstrations in 1964. These trials were in Los Angeles Calif. I looked forward to my vacation (so to speak) for a number of reasons, one of which was that I had heard from friends that there was a regional office of S.D.S. in

in that city and I looked forward to, at last, becoming a real part of S.D.S. and establishing line of communication that would keep me in touch while in the South. I also hoped to vote in the national referendum which the newspapers had informed me S.D.S. was taking of it's member in regards to a draft program (at last, thought I, participatory democracy at work). Upon mentioning the subject to the staff in the L.A. regional office however I found out that, although they to had heard about the referendum in the newspapers (like myself they glean most of their information about S.D.S. from the papers, as the news media ~~if~~ is far better informed about what is going on then we are) they had no other information. Later I was told that ballots had finally arrived and that we could all vote in the referendum, unfortunately that night a Mr. Beeth announced to the press the results of the poll and we decided that it would be a waste of stamps to send in our ballots. I was also dissapointed to discover that the L.A. regional office had almost as little literature as I had. And while they were quite competant to explain what S.D.S. was "A radicle union of students maintaining a vision.....etc.etc.etc." they were less informative as to what S.D.S. was actually doing. Apparently they to had tried to get literature and information but to no avail. I did however gather a great deal of interesting information by talking to them about what they did know, although none of it was currant information. What they told me about such things as ERAP, Vietnam, University Reform, community organising, etc was very stimulating, unfortunately ~~that~~ they could not tell me what was going on now, or in fact what was going on 6 months ago. Nor did they have anything I could read on these fascinating subjects other then a 3 fold leaflet about S.D.S. intitled "Students for a Democratic Society! a radical national union of students". These they have long since run out of.

I read in the paper the other day that S.D.S. was having a convention in Urbana Illinois among other things it mentioned that S.D.S. had decided not to support 12 of there members who had been drafted by General Hershey for demonstrating, and that S.D.S. had set up an executive board to make decsions. I hesitate as usual to take the news account at face value (they are very informative but somewhat less then enthusiastic about S.D.S., especially the Montgomery Advertiser and the Selma, Times-Journal)but having no other source of information I am at a loss as to what to do.

Aside from the lack of communication there are some other things about S.D.S. that bother me although I hesitate to mention them due to my lack of information. The only thing that I know about ERAP in a detail is about the Oakland project and that is not a project to be proud off. The S.D.S. groups in Southern Calif. seem to have no direction and no drive. As far a nation programs I have not heard of any The draft program was evidently "voted down", I have heard nothing about Vietnam in relationship to any S.D.S. program, nor have I heard anything about University Reform or any of the other issues. The only program that I have heard about (from the papers natch) is something called "Freedom Draft" which seem to me to be a nice liberal idea. If it is as stated in the press, that is, men go to work in the Peace Corps, Vista, or civil rights work in the south instead of the draft, I have only one request. Please don't send any of your "Freedom Draft" people to Alabama (especially were I'm working). I know that sounds terribly arrogant, chauvinistic, and nasty but if you knew the trouble that even dedicated people have in adjusting to the situation you would understand why I make that request. I have the feeling that people who come south because they do not want to be drafted will cause even more trouble then those who come because they want to work fer Freedom .

As I said in the begining I am sending you my \$3 dues. I would appreciate it if you would occasionally write to me, I suspect that the Southern Calif. regional office would also like to hear from you

Yours

Bruce Hartford