

September 23, 1964

Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute

Mr. Al Misegadis
Box 401
Lander, Wyoming

Dear Mr. Misegadis:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of recent date. Such encouragement and assistance which you give will be of inestimable value as the days unfold.

As to the sheet you enclosed, I should start by making a comment about the picture that has been widely circulated which shows me at the Highlander Folk School, a supposedly Communist training school. When one discovers the source of the distribution of this picture, it will be obvious immediately that very little truth can emanate therefrom. This picture was first distributed by two strong racist groups in Georgia and Louisiana. It was later taken up by the Birch Society and other conservative groups. The facts are these:

Highlander Folk School has never been charged with any kind of subversive activities by any of the Congressional Committees, nor has it ever been on the Attorney General's list of subversive groups. Highlander operated in the good American tradition of free discussion and debate of issues from points of view. It was one of the few places in the South that courageously brought Negroes and whites together for a few days of fellowship and dialogue. It was the bringing together of Negroes and whites that aroused the segregationists of the state of Tennessee and other southern states, and they set out on a determined campaign to render this unique school ineffectual by using the Communist tag.

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Some of the strongest supporters of Highlander have been the late Eleanor Roosevelt, Reinhold Niebuhr, Harry Golden, Harry Emerson Fosdick and numerous other patriotic and dedicated Americans who wanted to see the race problem resolved. So it is absolutely ridiculous, unethical, and untrue for anyone to refer to Highlander as a Communist training school. However, the circulation of this kind of material reveals that we are dealing with determined demagogues who will use any method to smear and block any move that seeks to make racial justice a reality in America.

May I share with you a copy of a reprint from my recent book, Strength To Love, which will give you some understanding of my general position in regard to Communism.

Again, thank you for your interest and concern.

Sincerely yours,

Martin Luther King, Jr.

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