

Box 1024  
Albany, Ga.  
Nov. 17, 1964

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Dear Friends,

The reason this comes to you from California and as a mimeograph letter is because it would be impossible to keep everyone whom I want to keep in touch with informed any other way. Therefore I imposed on my good friend, Phil MacDougal, (whom some of you know through Despite) to take on the job of mimeoing my letters and distributing them through a list which I left him. As this is a rather expensive project as it entails the cost of stencils and stamps (time donated!) I would ask that you each mail him a couple of dollars to offset his costs: to Phil MacDougal 2208 Curtis St. Berkeley, Calif. The other request at the outset is that these letters should not be published without first contacting me. There are a number of reasons for this - that the possibility of the book is still kept alive, that I don't want to outlive my usefulness here before it is necessary, etc. So, on with the merry adventures:

On October 29 Wendy and I got married. On Monday, Nov. 2nd we left Teaneck, NJ and drove down to Washington D.C. Spoke with Edgar Cahn of the Povdry Bill (Office of Econ Opportunity) but it will be a tough fight to get Federal money into Albany, Ga. Tuesday noon we left for Atlanta; drove through the night. Everyone at SNCC was leaving for Waveland, Miss. for the big conference, so we stayed in the apartment of one of the girls who works in the SNCC office. Spoke with some people on the Georgia Civil Rights Comm who were sympathetic, and with Jac Wasserman of Sharkcroppers Fund who will be very helpful. Also met Charles Morgan who now heads up the ACLU regional office in Atlanta. He will be doing research on the Americus hospital suit. We also had a rather unpleasant experience in Atlanta. A Foundation, who shall remain nameless, had expressed some interest in the Nursery School. The woman in their NY office had given Wendy the name of the people whose family money was behind the foundation and told us to call them when we got to town. She also called ahead and told them to expect us. Wendy called and we were invited to dinner, or rather, to their house for drinks, and to go out to dinner. We followed the detailed directions to Old Plantation Road, a street rather appropriately named. They did in fact live in an old plantation. Complete with a retinue of "darkies" (we were later regaled with "Humorous" stories about the promiscuity and imbecillity of their domestic staff). The woman was quite nice. New York Jewish, married to an Atlantian grad of Harvard Law. He was something else. A bigot who fancied himself a liberal. I had several bourbons and got to a point where I forgot who they were, or why we were there (to impress them with our seriousness-of-purpose, and conservative views on the Movement). So I let this guy have it. Explained exactly where it was at to him and let him know I despised people like him. I was so drunk that although I was aware of him pointedly picking up a newspaper to read in the middle of our conversation (discourse), his pacing around the room, and finally his leaving the room entirely, none of this seemed to convey any message to me. Wendy has subsequently informed me that she really didn't think she would get money from this particular Foundation anyway, and I am sure that in time she will find the entire episode quite humorous.

We drove out of Atlanta Sunday morning and arrived in Americus about noon. We had met Zev Aelony (one of the guys who was indicted for insurrection in Americus last year) in Atlanta and he asked us to stop by at Koininia Farm before we drove on to Albany. Koinonia is a farm run by Clarence Jordan, a minister-pacifist-integrationist. The farm is kind of an amazing place. He started it years ago as a communal society where Negroes and whites lived and farmed together. He was instrumental in bringing the chicken industry to S.W.Ga. The farm was very successful, with a roadside stand where produce was sold, etc. Then the Klan bombed them out, set fire to the buildings, shot at people, killed livestock, etc. Now only one or two families live their and ~~ask~~ scratch out a living. Zev lives out there too. He came from Minneapolis a couple of years ago and went out to the Farm for a kind of "vacation" while awaiting a trial in Ocala, Fla from a previous CORE demonstration. A few weeks after Don Harris, and the others were arrested on the insurrection charge in Americus he went into town during a demonstration and was also arrested - spent 11 weeks in jail until the Three Judge Court threw the ~~statute~~ statute out. He has spent some time in Israel on a kibbutz and aside from the fact that he is into some heavy "non-violence and love" is a very good guy. He has done a lot of work in Americus in terms of community projects. He also tries to involve the white community. I used to laugh at this, but it turns

out he has a couple of contacts high up in the system who have been very helpful to him. Maybe we'll even discover a white human being in Albany, but I still have my doubts. At Koininia we also ran into Slater King (CB's brother) and his wife and children. They go up there on the weekend very often - it is imperative to get away from Albany from time to time; Wendy and I have resolved that we will get out of two every second weekend and will try to encourage CB and Carol to get out on the alternate weekend. There is some, though not much, "culture" in Atlanta. An occasional foreign film; a drama group; some activities at the Atlanta U. complex (Negro colleges). We came into Albany late Sunday afternoon and went to Frank's Restaurant. Frank is Frank Holley, the guy I lived with last year. He bought the old South Grand Cafe and has turned it into a beautiful restaurant. The prospect of having a good restaurant in the Negro community is delightful. Tho some of the white downtown places are "officially" desegregated, I am not really interested in spending money there. And the existence of Frank's means there is someplace to go in Albany. Everyone hangs out there, SNCC people, pretentious Albany State students, the "black bourgeoisie" of Albany, etc. We met a couple of interesting professors at Albany State (Negro) there. One man in the French Dept. who did his undergrad work at Cal. He was drunk and kept making references to the California "Golden Bear". Not being caught up in undergrad activity myself I didn't understand his reference to "We Bears" for quite a while. The other professor is in History - had been active in the Movement in North Carolina and Louisiana - seems extremely bitter with his experiences there. Albany State is a terrible place - educationally and in other respects. The administration is a collection of Uncle Tom's, finks, and worse. Students active in the Movement were expelled. Sorority and fraternity living is "in"; clothes, cars, and booze - the very worst of white middle-class living is held up on a pedestal.

We thought it would be a simple matter to find a place to live, but it isn't so easy. However, we were extremely lucky. Goldy Jackson (extremely active in the Albany Movement - fired from her teaching job at Albany State) is out of town taking care of her sick mother. Her husband offered to let us stay with him until we find a place. Bo, as Mr. Jackson is known, is about the biggest man in the world. He had a very good job with the racist Albany Herald until the movement got started, and then he was fired. But he bought a gas station and is doing very well; he now also owns a liquor store. Bo isn't "with" the Movement anymore. By this I mean that he doesn't go to mass meetings, doesn't march (no one does), etc. But he can be counted on for anything. He says he is not non-violent, and this is a mild understatement. He is about 6' tall, weighs about 250 and is STRONG. Like he picked up a double bed mattress as if it were a pillow. He has several guns around all the time. No one messes with Bo. I have never felt as safe in my life as I do living in his house; besides his presence and the guns, he also has 7 dogs who run around the property at night. We stayed up late Monday night listening to the untold history of the Movement. Before we went home to Bo's we went to the weekly mass meeting. It was very small, the same old people who will go to mass meetings for the rest of their lives. Slater made a good speech. He talked about how the Movement has no funds, and yet the sororities can raise thousands for fancy dress balls and fashion shows. Slater is very different from the way I remember him. He is now extremely militant and very aware of just "where its at".

I didn't get into the office until Tuesday morning because we spent Monday unloading the car and taking care of visits, etc. But we stayed with CB and Carol Sunday night. It was very good to see him again, he is a beautiful person. He told me how he didn't write me to come back because he didn't want to put any pressure on me - he wanted me to make the decision myself. He added two more rooms to his office, so I now have my own office (instead of a table in the reception room - just like a real lawyer). Wendy has decorated my office - a Klee print and a SNCC poster. On Tuesday I started work. The first thing I did was draw up a motion to dismiss a motion for summary judgment. We represent two heirs of a woman who died a while ago. She was "married" to a Mr. Shepherd and he is trying to get her estate (a couple of thousand dollars). However, he was previously married to another woman and left her with three children - no divorce. Therefore we contend that the deceased was not his wife and he has no claim to her estate. He retained a white attorney to represent him. This means that we probably won't win until we get to the appellate court. What a way to practice law. Marriage and divorce laws present a problem in the Negro community. They are so much outside the structure of a regulated society that it is really absurd to hold them to the laws of the society. Can you expect that people who have no jobs and no money are supposed to get up \$150 before they can get

a divorce? In this particular case the guy is supposed to be a bastard, having never made any attempt to provide for his kids after he left his wife, tho he was in a position to do something. But usually when a marriage or "marriage" breaks up it doesn't make much sense to require a state-conferred divorce with its formality and burdensome expense. Later in the day Mrs. Pauley from the Georgia Council of Human Rights came into town (we had met her in Atlanta). She is a very good woman; an elderly white southerner who has been alienated by many of her friends in the white community because of her work. She is much better than what is understood to be a "white liberal". Spoke with Randy Battle. He is a SNCC worker (local) back from Mississippi. The conference isn't over but he left early because he was pissed off with what is going on. He claimed that there is a "take-over" by the Howard U. guys in SNCC, and that everything is getting to damn "sophisticated". However later in the week Cordell Reagon came back and told us very good news about the conference which will follow below. There was also a lot of debate at the Conference about the action of the Committee for Political Action. What they did was either misunderstood by the people who carried the story to SNCC, or purposely distorted for personal reasons. The Committee for Political Action (COPA) is a group made up of the leadership of the Negro communities which comprise the 2nd congressional district of Georgia where CB ran for Congress. Previously the Negro leadership in each town or county made his own deal with the power structure for delivering up the black vote. Now they were organized into COPA to back CB in the primary. This group represents a large potential block of voters, but more important, it represents the beginning of a COFO-like structure in S.W.Ga. Anyhow, after the primary when CB lost, there had to be a run-off between O'Neal and a guy named Wingate. Wingate claimed to be a Goldwater Democrat, but CB felt this was an act, and that he is someone who could have been worked with. Matson O'Neal was the official Demo Party nominee and Johnson voiced interest in his campaign. He was the state solicitor in State v. Charlie Ware. He is a segregationist. COPA met, and although CB personally expressed a preference for endorsing Wingate, he was outvoted. So COPA backed O'Neal. SNCC workers along with others in the community got out the vote for O'Neal and turned out a large vote from the Negro community. (in Albany Johnson only got 5000 votes,  $\frac{1}{2}$  Negro - (in some counties the entire Democratic vote was Negro). Terrell County cast 49 votes for Johnson. It seems that when you came in to vote you were handed a slip of paper which had two questions on it. One asked if you were registered and the other if you wanted assistance in casting your ballot. Underneath was a line for a signature. People signed thinking it meant that they were acknowledging that they were registered, and a local Goldwaterite accompanied them into the ballot booth. If you are a Terrell County Negro you have more sense than to object to this; therefore, 49 votes for Johnson). I only hope that he teaches these bastards down here a lesson when the postmasterships are passed out, but he probably won't.) After the decision was made by COPA to endorse O'Neal, the Demo Party offered \$9/day for people to get out the vote and the COPA-SNCC people took the money. This pissed the SNCC leadership off in Miss., and the story had it that CB sold out, etc. Anyhow, this is really all because alot of back-biting in SNCC; jealousy towards the SoWest Ga people, etc. CB felt that if COPA was to remain as an organization the people would have to live up to their commitment to back the choice that the gm organization voted to endorse. To do anything else would have destroyed COPA and reduced things to the former state where each Negro county leader made his own personal deal - with no resulting political strength. I think this will all be ironed out in time.

Wednesday Zev, Graham Wiggins, and Sammy Mahone (the latter two being local SNCC workers on the Americus project) came into see me. We talked about the possibility of a damage suit brought against the worst state patrol officer in the Americus area - a bastard who is constantly arresting Movement workers on fake traffic charges. Zev had been arrested by him a while ago and terribly beaten in jail. There is no question in my mind but that these civil rights act damage actions are an excellent therapeutic device. No one expects to win, but it causes the officers involved so much discomfort (expense, humiliation of being crossexamined by a Negro attorney) that they think twice before another false arrest or beating. However, financing these suits is a pax problem as the legal defense groups who finance most civil rights litigation tend to view these suits as being beyond their scope of interest. Another big reason why SNCC/COFO must have its own corps of attorneys who represent them and act solely in their interest - too often the interests of the workers in the Movement and the interests of the financial powers in the professional civil rights organizations, conflict. At night we went to a local meeting called by people interested in the possibilities of the Poverty Act being applied locally. Unfortunately it was very ill-prepared, not publicized, a bad night (some srorrity crap was taking place at the same time) and very

small attendance. The local Episcopal minister officiated. I wasn't impressed with him. They spent most of the evening trying to divide the city into areas to be subdivided into blocks with block captains. This is a good idea, but silly to do here as there already is an existing structure of block captains set up from CB's election and this was repetitious. Especially since there were only a couple dozen people there, mostly from the same middle-class neighborhood. Whenever a ghetto area would be called, no one raised their hand as living there. So the good Father would ask if anyone knew people living there who might act as area leader, and names would be called aloud at random. It was damn stupid. We saw Jac Wasserman of Sharecroppers Fund on the weekend and he said he was coming down here in the next few weeks and would speak at a meeting called to inform people about the Poverty Bill. This is the way it has to be done.

On Thursday I started to work on getting habeas for a guy who has been in jail since June 1. He was charged with manufacturing and possession of tax unpaid liquor (a very common crime around here). He is an illiterate Negro farmer, no education at all, not very intelligent, scared, etc. (He lives in Terrell County which should explain him to those familiar with S.W.Ga.). His father retained a local white attorney who pleaded him guilty tho he insisted he was innocent and even told the judge he was innocent of the charge. He was sentenced to 3 years (I should add that he was first sentenced to 6 months and a \$650 fine but when he didn't get up the money for the fine he was resentenced to the three years). So we will see if having a white attorney who pleads you guilty against your wishes is the "right to counsel" that Gideon v. Wainwright talks about. The big problem here is that there is no record of the case at the trial court so we must count on the integrity of the judges' recollection. Other issues in the case is that the "trial" took place in the judges' chambers from which the father was excluded.

On the weekend we went up to Atlanta to the Southern Students Organizing Committee Convention. (their pin is the black hand and white hand clasped over a rebel flag - it about drives white southerners out of their minds). SSOC was organized as a group who would work on involving students on white campuses, as SNCC was theoretically working on the Negro campuses - but as of 6 days before the convention SNCC announced what had always been known; that they were not working on campuses, but only convened with community work, and that SSOC was left to do work among college students. This is a good thing in a way as the Negro college students wouldn't have anything to do with SNCC, being thought of as a band of natural-headed, jean-clad, beatniks. But a different approach might make some inroads, especially at the State (Negro) schools. Anyhow, right now the entire exec board of SSOC is white (because of their original intent) - the consensus of the convention was not to take any action, but to get some Negro organizers out into the field and have another convention in a few months when the Negro schools can be represented. SSOC is not an exclusively civil rights organization but is concerned with peace, prosperity, etc. The people run from unbelievably bad little fluffy-headed white southern girls (a thousand times worse than the nastiest examples from northern campuses) to some very radical kids. I was suprased - they are on the whole, quite a bit better than I thought that they would be. California political activity tends to make one somewhat of a snob. There were about 150 white southern college students, from all over the south except, of course, Ala and Miss. (correction: one young white guy from NY who is teaching at Tougaloo, but that doesn't really count). The speakers were all very good. Don West, an old radical poet and historian told of the Civil War and Reconstruction history of northern Georgia. i.e. one county flew the Union flag all through the war. A guy from the AAUP (college professors organization) spoke. He tried to slip some generalizations about the noble works of the AAUP past the group, but Donna Moses (wife of Bob Moses) stood up and asked some painfully pointed questions. This inspired me to further pin him down to the point where he admitted that the AAUP wasn't about to censure southern racist schools who had so intimidated their faculty that no one dared speak. They only act where someone has spoken up and then been fired. (at least this is what they say they do - he was unable to name anyone who had been reinstated after their intervention) But we are being too hard on the man. It is just that the kids there weren't going to let him tell them that they had nothing to fear from the administration as the AAUP was right behind them - as this just isn't the case. A guy from the Texas Demo Coalition (labor, Negro, Mexican-American, intellectuals) spoke and was pretty interesting. These were the people instrumental in the Crystal City, Texas election where Mexican-Americans in an 80% Exx non-Anglo town, took over the Council where none had ever been elected before. CT Vivian, a Movement minister, and Metz Rollins (same) also spoke, and were excellent. Zinn was scheduled to speak but said he would

rather not make a speech - said history was being made that night - and made a few comments from the audience when the business meeting was getting bogged down in nonsense. The biz meeting went badly for a while, but after it broke up we had a smaller meeting and things were ironed out - the soul searchers, confessors, repenters, etc. were silenced, and problems of organization and structure (held to a minimum) were ironed out. It was good. Sunday we left before Foreman's speech as we had to get back to Albany for dinner with Bo's parents who live out in the County. Delicious down-home meal.

Sometime during last week we met Kit Havoric(sp?) Davis knows her. She is a peacenik left over from the Quebec-Quantanamo walk by the CNVA people. She is "working in the white community". Maybe I'm just too damn cynical. She said something about being nervous about where she was living, so I told her to get a pistol. She was shocked. She was a medical student at Stanford, but left to go on the Peace Walk. I told her I thought that she could make a hell of a lot more valuable contribution by coming back here as a pediatrician (Albany has only one MD and one osteopath who are Negro) but she feels her role as the "liason" between the white and Negro communities is more important. Maybe. The omission of mention of the nursery school is intentional. Quite a lot of local enthusiasm has been generated over it. In fact, when people met to discuss the poverty bill, the first priority suggestion was for day care centers, so they don't have to be sold on the need. But I will leave this entire subject for Wendy to discuss in her letter (and hopefully she will write one).

Monday the same old crap starts. Rev. Wells is in jail again. Rev. Wells is always in jail. He had been arrested since the Movement started here; he is one of the defendants in the US v. 9 Movement defendants; he was recently charged with insurrection but is out on bond pending that case to come before a three judge court. On Monday Rev Wells went to court to pay a traffic fine (a phoney charge) He was scheduled to appear last week and did, but the arresting officer was not available so the judge told him to come back at 10 o'clock today. He came back at 10 and was fined \$20 on the speeding ticket (or whatever it was) Then the officer requested that he be held in contempt as the traffic court starts at 9 and he wasn't there. He objected to this as he was instructed by the judge to be there at 10, but the judge said he didn't remember this and fined him \$10 for contempt. Of course the Rev refused to pay and has spent the last two days in jail. He is an amazing man; refuses to be intimidated by the police - they hate him but they can't beat him because he is not afraid. I was over to the County Court House today as I had to tell CB that Wells refused to come out of jail (wouldn't pay the fine) and that CB should see him to advise him on further action. I noticed that the same old "White" and "Colored" signs are up on fountains, toilets, etc. I was mulling over the possibility of a suit forcing the county to remove them when one of the local kids came in and mentioned that the sign reading "White Ladies Restroom" now hung over the bathroom of a private home in town - maybe a law suit is the proper way to get these things removed, but there seems to be a feeling around that there is a quicker and more satisfactory way. And while on the subject of toilets I should mention the sequel to the story of the toilet here in the office. In the piece that was in The Progressive I had mentioned that the toilet in the hall of CB's office really turned me off, what with bums coming up occasionally to puke in it, or pee on the floor. When CB got the two additional rooms to his office, a private bathroom (which is kept spotless) came with them. Anyhow when the first law student arrived this summer he thought that it was Dick Duane (a friend from law school in Berkeley who clerked for CB this summer) Instead it was a guy from NYU who had just been to California for a while. Due to this misunderstanding CB understood him to be from California, and therefore my friend, who would certainly know about the messy toilet story in the Progressive. So the first thing he did upon being introduced to the guy from NYU was to take him by the arm, drag him into the bathroom, and say something like: "Do you think this will satisfy him". The NYU guy just stared at him open-mouthed for a long, long time.

It is Tuesday night as I write this - I will try to be more regular in my correspondence in the future, but going away for the weekend kept me from being able to write sooner. Today we learned that 2 Republicans are going to run against the 2 Demo's who won in the primary, for the City Council seats. I don't think that this has ever happened before. A two-party racist system - who can yell "nigger" louder. The platform of the two republicans is a simple one. They propose only one thing: to remove from the police force the 6 Negro cops who were hired a few weeks ago. (they were hired immediately after the Harlem(Albany)

riots as the white cops are scared shitless to go into the ghetto. When the riots started here the cops are supposed to have run, ducked into stores, etc. Anyhow the 6 cops who were hired are ~~xxxxxxx~~ not held in very high esteem by the Negro community. One of them was on the job one day when he shot a Negro to death ("self defense"). He has subsequently been fired for waving his gun around in a Negro nightclub when he was drunk out of his mind. Lumpen, no?

Cordell Hull Reagon, formerly with the Freedom Singers, is temporarily heading up the Albany project for SNCC while Harris runs around Africa (he just sent a card saying he is on his way back). Cordell is a very sharp guy, been around the Movement from the very beginning. He has just come in from the Miss. conference for a couple of days to see if he is to stand trial - the conference will go on for a few days ~~h~~ yet and everyone should be back here the 21st of Nov. Anyhow, he brought very good news. After a whole lot of soul-searching the following decisions have been reached: Foreman has agreed to stay on but wants 3-4 months off for ~~rest~~ and to write his book. We spoke to him in Atlanta for a little while. He looked like he was going to die. He is a very gentle, humble guy. I had no idea that he even knew who I was but in the middle of a conversation he asked ~~h~~ me if ~~xxxx~~ my book was coming out soon. Also, the argument between the centralizers and the de-centralizers has been settled. No longer ~~will~~ the executive board set policy making decisions (complaint was that the exec board was getting "sophisticated" and professional - out of touch with the people - that it was a bunch of Howard U smart-asses). So it is decided that all policy decisions are to be made by the project directors, the people in the field. As this is too unwieldy a small group from them has been designated to serve as a continuations committee to make the decisions necessary between the times when all project directors will come together. It is very good and the people here seem ~~kn~~ happy. And this should make you happy too. It is as if SNCC was reading Despite (CB and Slater both read and enjoy it - when I say enjoy, I mean that they like much of what you say and agree with it). Also John Lewis' job, Chairman, has been abolished. There is no need for a chairman ~~wasthe~~ consensus. Too easy to become a "figure" like Martin, and SNCC wants no part of that.

Use what you want for Despite, but would prefer that you send me a copy of what you want. You could just send me a copy of the letter after it is mimeo'd and ~~xxxx~~ mark the material you plan to use. The Don Harris you mention in your letter to Murray that Mina was impressed with is the project director (currently in Africa) from here. He is excellent. The library and nursery school will be combined in one building (which is being negotiated for now) as a large community center. Very exciting. Right now books are shelved in the SNCC office, but will get a larger audience once we get a community center set up. Davis sent me the Spur Supplement and a SPUR. Mention to him that I want to be on their list. Also if he can send me an occasional PW (in plain wrapper please). Some son of a bitch shipped a bunch of clothes here COLLECT. Wow were people pissed off - the Movement is absolutely broke, and it cost \$30. Mention this in Despite just to make people aware of stuff like this. Goldie (who is in South Carolina taking care of ailing mama) said that she got a \$1000. check from California) WHO DO YOU KNOW??

I have marked out in red ink everything that should not be sent out for general consumption in the mimeo'd letter. Please mail me a copy when you get them out.

Your faithful reporter,

Dennis