

Dear Friends,

Last Tuesday I got to see Laurie Pritchett (Chief of Police) again. He didn't look too pleased to see me, which is not his usual posture. I wanted to get word to Rev. Wells that CB was tied up in the County court, and would be over to see him later in the day, so Graham Wiggins (SNCC staff in Americus) and I went in to the Chief's office. I assumed that his "intelligence reports" would have made my return known (or perhaps this is what my ego demands) but he seemed surprised and rather uncomfortable by the visit and was very brusque. It was only a few minutes before he recovered his usual composure and asked me how California was, etc.

The next night we went to the usual Wednesday night Poverty Bill meeting the group here has a great deal of trouble getting off the ground, being much more concerned with the niceties of parliamentary procedure and the need of self-expression which takes the form of everyone telling a personal anecdote about whatever subject is being discussed. For example, Mr. White who is the principal of the Negro vocational school, and a very good man in terms of trying to get this program moving starts to talk about the possibility of classes in sheet-metal work under the Manpower Development Act. This statement immediately occasions someone in the audience to tell about his friend who is a skilled auto-mechanic but only gets laborers wages in a white owned car dealership - this is punctuated by "isn't that the truth" from various other people in the audience. When he is done someone will either argue with him about his friend - like the dentist will tell him that the friend should demand higher wages (the dentist is notoriously out of touch with what is happening, having made a fortune by yanking teeth all day long - that is the nature of dental work here, gold fillings and yank the rotten ones.) Or someone will tell another story which might have been keyed by what was said by either speaker, or perhaps just came into his mind at that particular moment. And so the meeting goes - the concession that has to be made to Democracy can at times be very costly in terms of really accomplishing anything. The Right Reverend (he severely reprimanded CB for calling him "Father") presides over all. A very black man who knows God through the agency of the Episcopal church, he does not feel very comfortable in Albany, Georgia. Perhaps it is unfair, but I have the feeling he would really like an all white congregation on Long Island, and dedicate himself and his congregation to getting some Negro members into their church. Anyhow the Reverend is very caught up in parliamentary procedure and when things aren't going his way he will lean out toward the audience with his hands folded in front of him, flick his bright pink tongue in and out of his mouth rapidly and say, "and what are the desires of the group in this matter". He is very very young looking, thin and nervous. The other day when Zev had been talking about what the Community Action projects of the Poverty Bill should be like, and talked in terms of a representation from across all social and economic lines of the community, and that the representation from poor neighborhoods should come from the poor themselves, and not from a "leader" from this neighborhood like a minister - the Father (excuse me, Reverend) said he didn't think this was a very good idea at all. It was obvious that CB was getting very frustrated with the way the meeting was going. They spent two hours reading a proposal for a neighborhood survey aloud - the everyone had a mimeographed copy - with each question in the survey being answered by the group and several stories told around each suggested topic. Since we wanted to incorporate the group we needed the names of three incorporators - this is a mere formality, but we wanted to have the group ~~select~~ select the three people whose names would go on the petition to the Court to incorporate. CB took the floor and made a complete ass out of the Reverend, although he ~~claims~~

claims that this wasn't his intention. I had written up a memo on how to go about incorporating a non-profit corporation (it seems that my main work down here has been in the corporate field). CB explained this to everyone and then asked that three names be ~~ask~~ selected so that we could file the petition. The Reverend wanted to know if we couldn't select more than three people and CB explained that any number over ~~three~~ two could be selected, but that three was the minimum requirement of the law, and that as you paid per word for the petition and for the newspaper advertisement, "your decision should be made in light of financial considerations." The Rev. seemed to miss the point because he then started to call for more names. At this point CB got up and made it painfully clear as to the wisdom of not having more than the minimum requirement. The Rev. got the message.

I hope that I'm not going too hard on the clergy. Certainly there is no one braver or a more dedicated and faithful worker than Rev. Wells. But it is also hard to think of Rev. Wells as a minister, in the Albany, Ga sense of the word. In the Negro community, so often the Church is seen as a step out of the dismal black world ~~of~~ in which everyone is caught. The role of the minister is very different here - he is recognized to be a lecher by most of the community. He drives a big fancy car and pushes his congregation to build him a big fine house and a fancy church - this is the ~~si~~ important status symbol here. Wells has a little church out in the county and he only serves as a part time minister, the congregatinn being too poor to pay him a salary. The ministers have kvery little connection with the Movement. They were down on it from the beginning (most of them) because it was a threat to the status quo which they thrive on. Now some of them drive the maids to work every day (when the Movement started it put the bus company out of business) but that is the extent of the involvement and it is limited to only a few of the Ministers. As a group I find them rather distasteful. Whenever clothing comes into the Movement office they are on it like a pack of flies, pulling boxes apart and pulling out the choice ~~it~~ items. There is now going to be a changed set up in the distributinn of clothing ~~far~~ so that it is more equitable. The ~~was~~ reason for this entire discourse on the ministers is that one of the bastards stole some of Wendy's toys. Her sister and a girl-friend had bought her two very expensive, wonderful wooden toys - a train and a derrick - at some place in upstate New York which specializesi in GOOD childrens toys, not the crap that is on sale most ~~pak~~ places. They were mailed to the Movement address and the boxes addressed to Mrs. Wendy Roberts. When they came, the woman who is in charge of the Movement office, but them off to the side. The boxes both said "TOWS" on them. They sat there for a couple of weeks and ~~was~~ were the subject of constant questions from the ministers, like who did they belong to, etc. One day when the woman who runs the office was going to leave one of the minsters told her that he wanted to stay behind a few minutes and would lock up; when she came back the next morning Wendy's two boxes were gone. The woman called the minister who denied knowing anything about it but said that he would try to locate them and "isnt it terrible the way people steal". Several days went by and nothing happened. We came to town in the meantime and when we went out to get the toys were told what happened. The woman wanted to call the police as she was really hot, but Slater talked her out of it. She called the minister again and his wife said he was out (he hadnt been by the Movement office since her first phone call) and when the wife was asked about the missing toys was absolutely silent and then hung up. The Movement woman asked me to call. I didnt want to get into the hang-up about being white, but I was also furious that the bastard should get away with it so I called. I told him I was working for Attorney King and that some ~~kp~~ packages, sent through the USMail, and destined for my wife, were missing; that I had been informed that he might have some ideas as to how to go about locating the toys. I also informed him that mail theft is "a very serious federal offense, leading to many years in a federal penitentiary, and that I was so disturbed about this violation of federal law that I would find it necessary to contact the proper authorities in the morning". Well the



good minister, who prior to that statement had spoken in rather precise English in very formal tones, suddenly reverted to a "Yassuh, I sho do understand and ah sho will try to get find where them things is at". I felt very bad about the whole thng, especially having to be Mr. Whiteman, but sometimes it is a very handy thing. Fifteen minutes later both toys were returned to the Movement office. One was even assembled. No questions were asked. Word had just gotten to the Movement office that Rev. Wells was out of jail. CB called the Judge, who was pretty embarrassed by the whole thing, and rescinded the ~~an~~ contempt citation. Anyhow the toy-taking minister made some remark like, "that's hhe difference between me and Rev. Wells. I would of just paid the darn fine and been done with it, instead of making all that fuss and going to jail. It wasnt important enough." Mrs. Nelson, the woman who runs the Movement office, told him: "No, the difference between you and Rev. Wells is that he is a man and you aren't anything."

On Wednesday we went out to Dawson, Terrell County. On the way out we passed the church which had been rebuilt since the rednecks burned it to the ground. Last summer it was still a tent where the Terrell County Movemtn held their meetings. It's a beautiful church and a damn shame the people didnt use the money to replace the church with a community center - but especially in the counties, the church really has that role. In the court house in Dawson we got to see the indictments in the cases against Burkes (which I drew the habeas petition on). The fine and 6 month sentence is scribbled on the cover, and then crossed out and the 3 year sentence written on. The people in ~~an~~ the Clerk's office, one old woman and the Clerk himself, were, if not corteaus, at least civil.

The other day Mr. Lane and two young ladies came in from Cordelle, Ga. which is a town fairly near to Albany. The name is pronounced "core-deal"- there was some initial complaine with the public accomodations section of the new civil rights act, but the police were intervening and keeping Negroes out of restaurants. They had come to see whether we could bring a law suit. We told them the kind of information that ~~an~~ should be collected to make the best possible case and they will be upa again next week. This is how it is all over this part of Georgia. There was initial complaine, but now the restaurants are startidg to exclude Negroes again, they are starting to become "private club - show membership card at door", etc. So that panacea, the Civil Rights Act, will have to be implimented by private litigation, an expensive and burdensome practice. And meanwhile the papers feature little articles by bourgeois New York Negroes who drive through Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi and write a piece about "how friendly the peple were, and how complaine is almost total". Such a piece of crap appeared a few weeks ago in the NY Herald Tribune. The Albany restuarant that he claims to have ~~he~~ eaten ~~him~~ in is now one of the worst offenders for Excluding Negroes.

CB is wearing the SSOC pin which I brought back from the conference. It is a four color pin with a large rebel fa flag and black and white hands clasped across it. He said the crackers downtown just pretend they dont see it but he gets alot of questions from Negroes about it. He seems much less forman than last year, and I cant be sure if it is just that our relationship is much closer, or whether he has changed ~~a~~ ~~an~~ in his repponse toward everyone. He and Carol have gone up to Atlanta for the weekend. Wendy and I are staying at their place taking care of the 5 kids. They have gone away so infrequently over the past 9 years that it is tragic. I hope we will be able to convince him that he will be able to function much better if he gest out of here from time to time like we plan to do.

On Thursday afternoon CB went down to the work camp in Mitchell Countyt to get Burkes to put his X on the petition for habeas. I was supposed to go along, but Mrs. Motley from the Inc. Fund in NY called and wanted a list

of cases of police brutality. This was in regards to the statement that Hoover had made about Martin Luther King. "De Lawd" has been challenged and even the NAACP has to jump in to tell the federal people where it is at. This is a damn good thing because it forces a criticism of the FBI which is slow to come from the more established civil rights groups. It is also good because Dr. King is respected by many people in this country who really believe the FBI is a good thing and an efficient, honest operation serving to aid the cause of equality. Now maybe they will be forced to re-think their position. I guess Hoover is really getting senile. He would never have been this blatant and stupid a few years ago.

Yesterday CB went to court to represent his brother Paul. Paul is the youngest, married to a girl he met in Spain while he was going to college - they had a baby a couple of weeks before we arrived in Albany. Paul manages the family grocery store which CB's parents started. It seems that last year the heating system went out in the middle of the winter. Paul called one of the local heating contractors (a white profession in Albany) and he came out, looked at the unit, said it needed a part, and that he would fix it the next day. He didnt come all that day or the next morning, so Paul called another place who came out and made some adjustments and it worked fine. The following day the first guy came back. Paul told him that he couldnt wait because he couldnt keep the store open in the cold and the guy said that it was o.k., no hard feelings, and all that crap. Paul never heard from him again and never got a bill. Just about a year later he gets a summons. This guy is suing him for \$10. This really infuriated Paul. He said he would have paid it even if the guy didnt do any work because he had contracted with him first, if the guy had only sent a bill for his time. But to do it this way, with the extra \$7.50 court cost tacked on, was too ~~my~~ much - and Paul wanted to fight it. So CB went on down to the City Court and made an absolute ass out of this heating man. Asked him why he had never sent the bill, and whether this just wasnt done vindictively, etc. During the cross-examination a cracker lawyer who was in court on other matters jumps up and says to the Court that he would like to appear "amikus kure E I" (as it was pronounced). The court didnt understand, and he explained, as a "Friend". Oh sure, said the court, and he then moved for a continuance to allow the heating man to get any attorney, as "it just isnt right for him to be up here helpless against CB". Judge granted the continunace. CB jumped up and wanted to know whether he would be ~~all~~ allowed to be heard to oppose the motion that had just been interjected by this "official intermedler" and ~~an~~ the fight started. The cracker lawyer said that he was sure that CB recognized that the man had a right to counsel as that is what the federal court said in Gideon. This was too much. CB said, "So that the court should not be misled as to the holding in the Gideon case, I would point out that Gideon was a criminal matter, not a civil suit, where a man was deprived of his liberty. I would also point out that Gideon was a defendant who had requested an attorney to protect his rights, not a plaintiff, the instigator of this action, who certainly could have an attorney represent him when he initiated this action." He then went on to state that he was sure the heating man had many other people whom he was suing that day in court and didnt retain ~~an~~ attorney for any of those matters - and the judge did acknowledge that this was the case. The jdge finally said that he would take the motion under advisement. The next day he phoned CB and told him that he had dismissed the case. Another victory. But he wouldnt do it ~~a~~ in open court. What a way to practice law.

The SNCC people are back from Mississippi, but I havent had a chance to speak to anyone ~~xxxxxxthexweekendxxixh~~ yet, I hope to do this over the wekkend. We got a phone call from Victor Rabinowitz. He had argued Joni's case in New Orleans before the 5th circuit. He said he didnt feel very confident as it was about the roughest panel the 5th can put together.