

Feb. 28, 1965

Dear Phil:

Wendy was at the office with me to day and I asked her to address and envelope to you - so that explains the envelope. I am enclosing a check for \$5. to cover cost of record and extra mailing cost for books.

I will work back through the enormous pile of mail I get from you to see if anything needs an answer, before I start the newsletter. I like the idea of your contacting Minnis re foreign clippings - let me know if he responds to it - I will attempt to get in touch with Perdue inside the next week and see what he thinks. Also dig the East Oak Parish application for Title II funds. Somebody needs to expose that fucking poverty bill lie for what it is - here its impossible as people have to learn through experience what a shuck the whole thing is - right now they're all excited about dividing the billion dollars between a handful of counties in southwest Georgia - but maybe this is good in that it will intensify the disappointment when they learn that no one comes rushing down here with basket fulls of money for them. The latest despite cover is fantastic, I mean fantastic - Harawitz does better work every day. My kid brother is getting very excited by photography and this might be yet be his salvation - I was told that his work is also showing alot of promise.

In your letter to Murray of Feb 12 you mention something about Mina and what you will ask me about it - but that I had to tear myself away to spend an evening at Mina's - I hope I didnt give you the wrong impressing there. I was at the meeting in K & K's office - I had not met Mina at that time -and was not especially anxious to leave K&K just to meet her because I felt that the legal things being dismissed were more important. But I liked her very much and was very interested in the thing she is doing with the school in NY.

Havent had a free minute but will definitely read Jacob's piece that you sent, and then return it. Glad you're getting on with Doug Hill so nicely - tell him I said hello and wish him whatever you wish people who are about to take that god damn nightmare exam.

I'll close on this now and start the newsletter or it wont ever get written for this week.

dennis

Phil: Just found some more notes I jotted down to tell you about. The final word on SNCC structure (Randy told me about this and was very pleased with the outcome) is that they will have an "executive committee" which, he said, will have power to order pencils and send out for coffee, and ~~that~~ that's about all. It will be composed of about 8 to 16 people with one from each project and only one or two Atlanta and outside the south people. Those elected turned out to be mostly, non-college, black, and southern. Also, the summer project is WILD. They don't have any plans for northern volunteers to come to Mississippi - too many fucked up too much last time. But they are recruiting northern volunteers to go to Washington to take part in massive demonstrations around the Congressional challenge - another Foreman flash. The thing with Malcolm was a real shock - he was really on to something - the man knew what he was taking about and Washington knew that people were listening. Harris called from NY very upset, and filled me in on the killing. There was supposed to be a story in the NY Post written by Wechsler which was supplied by Don Harris. I don't have a copy but you can probably see it at U. Calif library or maybe write one of your friends in NY.

Dear Friends:

The week opened ominously with the murder of Malcolm X. The reaction in Harlem was very interesting. There seemed to be a feeling of real loss. A lot of people were convinced that he was done in by more important forces than the Muslims, but after a day or so the word has drifted down to SWGa that it probably was the Muslims after all. - There is a weekly newspaper here edited by a faculty member at Albany State (the Negro college) and his editorial, which had to be written the day of the assassination, left one with the impression that he believed it was done by the CIA - and that's a hell of a position from someone at this arch-reactionary school.

Everytime someone comes into the office with another story about how they were screwed by the white folks I have a little debate with myself about whether I should even bother recording it - there is so damn much of this kind of thing that I have gotten very jaded about it and really don't respond to it unless it's especially grotesque. Like the other day a woman came in from one of the rural counties. She owns her own house and some little land around it, but she had gotten into debt and got a loan from a white man - sometime I will write about the whole problem of Negroes trying to get loans from banks or Federal sources - and she went on paying on the note and its exhorbitant interest. A white lawyer was involved in the transaction as she negotiated the loan through him, and he had handled her mother's estate when the mother died. Anyhow, after the estate was closed and she had paid the lawyer all she owed him, he told her to come into the office and advised her that he had "forgotten some court costs" and told her this would be an additional \$200. He told her not to worry about it as she could give him a note and could take as long as she wanted to pay - and should just go on and pay off the other note and not worry about the "court costs". He also gave her a paper to sign in the course of this transaction. About a month later she went back to the lawyer and asked him exactly how much she owed him so that she could arrange to pay it off weekly. He told her that she didn't owe him a cent as she had given him a warranty deed to her house and property (worth over \$5000) subject to her keeping a life estate in it (ie. he would get the house on her death). She went to another white lawyer in the same town and this man told her that he couldn't do anything about it but that she should come to Albany and see CB. Which means it must really be gross. Anyhow that's where it stands. We will have to find the time to get out there, search the records in the Court House, and then bring suit against one of the counties leading citizens before an all white jury - so you wonder what it's all about.

And yesterday another one. This guy came in with a very complicated transaction about some land that his father owned in a small town in Alabama, but after he told the story it became very clear that it was the

same damn thing. A local white man just went and built a house on the property of this guy's father, and then sold the house and land. He obviously forged a deed and recorded it. So the father went to the local white attorney who threw him out of the office. About the only thing we can do is refer it to a lawyer in Alabama, who will have to travel 100 miles to this town (its right near the Georgia border) to find out what we know already, and still know that there isnt a hell of a lot he can do about it.

The big news this week has been the school desegregation suit from Moultrie. On Tuesday we drove down to Thomasx Moultrie to serve subpoena duces tecum (order to bring certain records to court) on the two Superintendent of school and a couple of the Board members. I drove out to the palatial home of one of the Board members - a man who owns a guano factory in Moultrie, to serve him. His wife answered the door and told me he wasnt home. I told her I wanted to serve him and would tender it to her. She turned very pale and jumped back, so I told her it was nothing to worry about, it was just service for the school case - meaning that I wasn't serving her husband for a suit against him, but simply in his representative capacity as a member of the Board. This very pleasant looking woman, symbolic of virtuous white womanhood of the South, contorted her face into a mask of hate and told me, "you dont know what worry is". So I said goodbye and went on about my rounds. Serving ~~xxx~~ people in federal suits gives me a great deal of sadistic pleasure - you watch them get all pale and crumble as they really dont know what is ~~x~~ happening - and you think how many Negroes they have put in exactly the same position.

The school suit was heard in Thomasville and went on for two days. Judge Elliot was very pleasant the first day but seemed a little pushed out of shape when we went into the second day and lost some of his graciousness. Elliot, by the way, was one of the first appointments of Kennedy and has a record of consistently voting against civil rights. There was some pretty funny testimony put in the record like when the Superintendent admitted that white school teachers arex all paid a bonus each year, but Negro teachers are not - this is to get around unequal pay scales that would be held unconstitutional. His justification for thisx was that white teachers are very hard to get and are in great demand while Negro teachers are a dime a dozen - a while before that he told us that the Negro teachers at Bryant H.S. are as well qualified as the white teachers at Moultrie H.S. - so CB asked him if there was a shortage of white teachers, and you could get Negro teachers who ~~xxx~~ were equally qualified without having to pay them a bonus, and the school board is claiming that its broke and therefore cant make repair on Bryant H.S., then why not simply hire Negro teachers for the white school and save the bonus money - He didnt get an answer. There was also some interesting business re the re-accreditation of Bryant H.S. They (the School Board) brought the file of letters on this subject as ordered by our subpoena. There was a letter of Jan 22 from the State Accreditation Board to the Negro principal, Daniels, telling him that his school was off the list. Then there is a letter of Feb 22 from the State Accreditation Board to the Superintendent of Schols telling him that he had received his letter and that based on that he could assure him that the school ~~x2~~ would be reaccredited by April. But the mysterious letter which arranged for this re-accreditation had somehow disappeared from the Schol Boards files and the Supt. denied any knowledge of it. The really great testimony came from our witnesses however, like Ann Hunt/~~xxxx~~ one of the student leaders who said, in response to a question about why she insisted on going to the white school: "I am 15 years old and as long as I can remember the white folks have had things better than me, and now I want some of what they got." And another great witness was a man who had sent his two daughters to school in Atlanta so they wouldnt have to go to that lousey high school. When the other attorney asked him, "Do you know that the Board promised to fix the drainage?" he replied, "Yes, but I dont believe it" and went on to tell them that ~~x~~ it was the "custom" of the Board to make a whole lot of promises and never to keep any.

Finally, the Board put the principal on. This man was the most subservient looking man I have ever seen. Every time he was about to say something he put his hands together like he was praying, lowered his eyes, and then spoke. I was convinced he was a "tom" who would just parrot answers taught him. But it was as if he had to make some sort of grave moral decision because when CB started to cross examine him, and asked him if, in his opinion, the buildings in his school were "usable" (which he certainly could have said that they were usable), he thought for a minute and then said that they were not. He went on to testify that most of them were hazardous, fire traps, etc. This was on the second day and in the afternoon. For a day and a half before this he had sat, alone, in the witness room. People passed by him but no one spoke to him. And maybe this just ate into his conscience because he really really came through.

Anyhow when all the testimony was over Elliot got into something which I still cant figure out. He allowed a certain amount of time for briefs and of course this would only start after the record was in, so he wouldnt have to render a decision for quite a while. But then he started talking about Bibb County and ~~Mus~~ Muscogee County school suits, which were then before the Fifth Circuit - they were grade a year plans from last year which were being appealed (oh I forgot to mention that the Board offered a two grade a year plan, 1st and 12th). Elliot said that when those cases came down they would probably answer alot of the questions that he would have to answer in our case - and kept talking about how he should wait and see what the Fifth Circuit does. I couldnt figure out whether he was doing this to stall off the decision even longer, or whether he just wanted to make it seem as if it was out of his hands and that he wasn't a "traitor". He said he had no idea when those cases would be decided. Two days later they came down - I havent seen the opinion yet but heard that the Court told the School Boards to quit screwing around that they have had 11 years since Brown and its too late now to ask for more time - and ordered total deseg. by 1968 with a start being grades 9-through 12 and also first grade. Which is exactly what Moultrie would want as it would allow the deseg of all of the classes in Bryant H.S. and there is such enthusiasm there now that you would probably have half the school requesting transfers instead of just 4 or 5 brave kids. So we'll have to see if Elliot takes any action in the light of this decision. Today I wrote a three page letter to the Dept of HE & W - Moultrie filed their 2 grade a year plan as complaine with Title 6 of the CRAct of 64 and alot of the Negro parents wrote to HE & W that this was not acceptable. Based on the case we presented in Fed Court I also wrote a letter asking that they turn down the Board's plan and cut off Fed funds unless they come up with a better plan, like total deseg. I have been told, unofficially, that HEW has accepted every plan submitted to them including obvious token crap like grade a year in some Miss. counties where integration wont come from for 100 yeass. But maybe the letter writing campaign will help. Moultrie gets about 10% of its money from the Fed Government and can not afford to loose it.

On Friday night I was invited to a union meeting. The employees at Bob's Candy Co. have been trying to organize for many years - it is the most paternalistic place in the whole world - but alot of the men there see through the paternalism and realize that if they dont do things for themselves they will never be free. Anyhow it will be very close - the election will be on March 17. I have a general rule that I will never speak at mass meetings because of a whole lot of reasons, but this occasion demanded an exception and I gave a long speech about unions and civil rights and a whole lot of emotional stuff - because a union of Negroes in the South is nothing more than the Movement carried to another logical step. Mr Bob pays his people ~~XXXX~~ \$1.25 (he has alot of Fed contracts or it probably wouldnt be that high) - and the sentiment was that

if they lost the election and were later fired it didnt really matter as a job that lousey they could always get another. But its very hard to convince the women, and Bob is having Bingo games every week with big cash prizes (the bingo coincides with the union meeting) and is offering cash bonuses to women with over 3 children and a whole lot of othercrap. I havent been this excited ~~about~~ about unions in a long time but this is good - the local is in Atlanta right now, and there are two other factories organized in Albany, both with a majority of white workers, but if Bob's gets organized then the local will be put in Albany and Albany will have an integrated local union - which should be interesting. One of the white shop stewards from the other factory was at ~~the~~ the meeting. He didnt say much, but a Negro who works there told me that ~~as~~ before the union he was the worst f sort of racist but now with his union job he cant afford that stuff and has comepletely changed his line. I doubt with much sincerity, but maybe he is beginning to see that he is just as screwed as any Negro who works along with him and it is only through their joint organization that they can better their ~~a~~ lot. But the union is having alot of problems. One of the Negro dentist's secretariess has been calling all the employees and telling them not to vote for ~~the~~ the union as it is a bad thing and will make Mr. Bob mad and he'll close his factory and go away. But the people are really strong. There was one woman who stood up and gave this great speech about what the union will mean to them and she didnt know how the other women could be married to men who were such whipped dogs that they wouldnt get together and stand up to the boss for decent wages. I have the feeling that this ist the kind of grass roots trade unionism excitement that was around in the 30s and 40s and has comepletely vanished most places. At them meeting I met the guy who lives in the other half of the duplex. I have seen him on the porch from time to time but other than just nodding at each other we had no relationship. But after them meeting we went out for a beer and then got together last night to play cards: Tonk and Whist which are ~~stans~~ Negro card games that I never heard of before - but fairly easy to learn. It turns out he's from Dawson (Terrell County) where Wendy worked doing voter registration a couple of years ago, and his wife is from Parrot, Ga (a minute town inthe same county). I thought our apartment was crowded until I saw his. There are two babies, plus his wife's two teenage sisters living with ~~the~~ them. And he works at Bob getting \$1.35 - a 10 cent raise after 6 months. He is worked a 40 hour week (4 days at 10 hours a day with no overtime) and has to supprtt 6 people on that and the \$20 his wife brings home. And some weeks he doesnt get a full 40 hours.

A very good thing happened this morning. Roy came over for breakfast and on the way down to the office afterwards Wendy took us past the place where the Nursery School will be set up (we have to wait until March 2nd for zoning clearance). Prior to this time he had been very disparaging about the N/S / seems he had a very bad experience as a child in nursery school and could remember details from days he spent there - like a poem about being "Miss MacMillan's liktle butter cup" and fingernail inspection, and prayers, and flag salute and all the other middleclass nightmares that most nursery schools get into. But Wendy started talking about what she wanted to do with the yard and maybe it was just seeing the place physk ally that turned him on, but alls of a sudden he got completely enthusiastic. Before he had offered to have Ramona work with Wendy and also vague f offers of help, but always prefaced by, "I dont know what youre trying to do, and I'm not sure I like it but Don (Harris) said you were good and to trust you so I guess..." but now he seems very excited about the whole thing. He started telling Wendy about what a great carpenter Randy is and what a perfect thing it would be for him...so maybe SNCC will prove some help in this ~~fx~~ after all. Dennis