

Swila

September 16, 1963

Dear Friends:

As I sit in our kitchen, typing, I can look out our back door into the yard. The leaves on our big shade tree are rusteling and it seems like another peaceful, warm day. It has always amazed me that the South can be so beautiful physically, and so twisted and evil spiritually. From here I can see quiet and sometimes lovely gardens, a stray cat sunning herself on our tiny back porch. And even I sit here quietly.....On the inside I'm torn. I don't even understand all the emotions that have swept over me since I heard yesterday that six children were murdered in Birmingham.

And yet it seems like just another in a series of half-expected incidents that shouldn't, but always amaze me as they reveal the depths of man's inhumanity. I'm even sick of reciting the facts - but I have to because we need your help. During this summer, over 200 people have been arrested in Americus, Ga., which is 37 miles from here. Many of them are still in jail. Twent girls between the ages of 9 and 13, were sent over to Lessburg, and kept in a room with absolutely nothing in it but 2 overflowing toilets and an old shower that drips dirty water. They sleep on the floor - and wear the clothes they were arrested in more than a month ago. They are sick and hungry, but they vow to fight on.

Three of our staff, Don Harris, John Perdew, and Ralph Allen, are being held in Americus on insurrection charges - for which they face the death penalty. The judge refuses to allow them bail, and even if he did, where would we get the money? They have more than \$40,000. bail apiece on other charges.

Here in Albany, 9 people - many of them leaders in the Albany Movement - were indicted on charges of conspiracy to obstruct justice, and perjury. These came out of a Federal Grand Jury investigation of the picket and boycott of a grocery store owner.

So here we a re. Many of our people are in jail. Three of our staff are facing death by execution at the hand of the State of Georgia. The Justice Dept. has done nothing about police brutality in Americus, although a fellow had his leg broken, and several people have had to have stitches. Yet a Federal Jury will be putting some of our leaders in jail for up to 10 and 15 years.

And finally, we have no money - we literally have about \$2 or \$3 (most of which will go for postage for this newsletter) with no prospect of any coming in. We're not eating very much these days.

Will you help? We need publicity, sympathy demonstrations, all kinds of pressure on the gov't., money, and food. We hope for a large demonstration in or near Americus (perhaps /ndersønville - the Civil War Cemetary) on Oct. 5. We must have other demonstrations around the country. Contact us or the Atlanta office for more information.

We have all been too silent, too long.....Birmingham is our viole nt testimony.

Yours for freedom,  
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