

FROM: JOHN ROSENBERG, STANFORD SENIOR

RE: THE VISIT OF CLIFFORD DURR, (WHITE) LAWYER FROM MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

From January 26 to February 2, Mr. Clifford Durr will be visiting the Stanford campus. All those interested in civil rights in the South should not miss this opportunity to meet one of the very few white Alabamians who has been willing to speak out on the injustices in that state.

Mr. Durr's family has been a leading one in Montgomery ever since that city has existed. Yet his legal activities in behalf of several civil rights workers (also native white Montgomerians) has led to his nearly total ostracism; clearly, "Southern Hospitality" does not extend to inside agitators. A man of less endurance (some would call it hard-headedness) would have left long ago to accept a safer and more profitable position elsewhere. On one occasion last summer, I asked him why he stayed. His reply: "I'll be damned if I'll be run out of my own town!" And he won't be.

My biographical information is rather skimpy, but I do know that he was a Rhodes Scholar--in fact, he has recently returned from Oxford where he delivered several lectures. He was also a close friend of President Roosevelt and was appointed to the Federal Communications Commission by FDR in 1945. During his 7 years on the FCC, Mr. Durr had several run-ins with J. Edgar Hoover over the dispensing of radio licenses, etc., to those who were rumored to be somehow affiliated with "communist front groups." In 1952, he was re-appointed by Truman, but was not confirmed since he refused to take the newly-required loyalty oath. After the Brown decision of 1954, Senator Eastland discovered that Mrs. Durr was the sister-in-law of Supreme Court Justice Black. In the process, he also discovered that the Durrs had belonged to some labor and civil rights groups which, in the thirties, included several communists. In an effort to embarrass Justice Black, he set out on a campaign to convict Mrs. Durr of communist activity. (Some may remember a few colorful headlines of that episode: "Black's Kin is Red!" was the way it looked in the local papers.) Having no evidence, he was of course unsuccessful. But as a result of his meddling, the political opinions of the Durrs became public, and they have been local outcasts ever since.

As an Alabamian myself, I feel qualified to state that the inspiration Mr. Durr has given to all those who would dissent has been valuable. More importantly, he introduces a ray of optimism into an otherwise bleak scene; for a state and a community which can produce someone of his stature can't be all bad.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (CHECK THE DAILY)

Tuesday, 26 January--4:15, lecture at Tressider

Wednesday, 27 January---7:00, discussion in Roble Lounge

Thursday, 28 January----7:00, discussion in Branner Lounge

Monday, 1 February-----7:00, discussion in Larkin House, Stern