

West Woodstock, Vermont

March 22, 1965

Dear Suzanne:

Another favor, please! I desperately need a quote from Faulkner's Southern Historical Society speech, which is in Ch V of Who Speaks or Albert has it elsewhere in the paper in a publication of the Southern Regional Council. The issue concerns the wrecking of the South twice in a hundred years on the Negro question. It is several sentences.

Many thanks!

Paul Crum

Looking back into history, he might thoughtfully reread the statement by Faulkner:

We accept insult and contumely and the risk of violence because we will not sit quietly by and see our native land, the South, not

* W. E. B. Du Bois, as early as 1903, observed in *The Souls of Black Folk*, that the "mass of the Southern whites" were "intensely democratic" and that, by consequence, they felt "acutely the false position in which the Negro problems place them." They did not, of course, feel it acutely enough.

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just Mississippi but all the South, wreck and ruin itself twice in less than a hundred years, over the Negro question.

We speak now against the day when our Southern people who will resist to the last these inevitable changes in social relations, will, when they have been forced to accept what they at one time might have accepted with dignity and goodwill, will say, "Why didn't someone tell us this before? Tell us this in time?"*/

I am not saying that a short course in history would automatically make the Southerner realize that to defend his identity he does not, to say the least, have to humiliate Negroes—nor have to condone such humiliation. But I am saying that the short course, prayerfully considered, might remove an impediment to such a realization—an impediment especially vicious in effect because it involves, in perverted form, some of his own finer instincts. And once that impediment is removed, he might be able to see facts as they are, and the Negro as he is. He might even be able to see himself as he is. He might find that he can be better than he thought he had to be.

The Yankee, like the white Southerner, has been in for a shock. He has lived in his dream world, too; I have heard many a Yankee say of Negroes, "Who do they think they are?" Or, "They've got every chance anybody has if they'd just get off relief." Or, "Look at the way they're acting, after all we've done for them up here." However little he likes the fact, the white man on the commuter train to Westchester has had to lift his eyes from the *Wall Street Journal*, to paraphrase Whitney Young, and look up the streets of Harlem. Or Harlem has come busting into his living room to dominate the TV screen. The white man (Yankee) at last has had to recognize the Negro as a human being, sometimes a rather appalling human being. And he has had to realize that the legal rights he had so complacently regarded all these years as his largess to the Negro hadn't, in themselves, amounted to a hill of beans.

If the Yankee is a liberal—even if he is what is called a "fighting liberal" and has signed statements and sponsored dinners and rung doorbells and made speeches and gone to bi-racial parties and has a life membership in the NAACP—he is apt to discover that no-

* *Three Views of the Segregation Decision*, Southern Regional Council, Atlanta, 1956.

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body is very grateful to him. Nobody is going to be very grateful to him just because he gives a Freedom Dance (discreetly integrated) in Westchester or a Freedom Garden Party in Long Island, tickets \$100 a couple, and sends the take to help liberate Mississippi. In fact, in regard to Mississippi, he might find it a penitential exercise to ponder a remark by James Farmer: "We find, incidentally, that many white liberals will give much more readily to support Mississippi than they will to support any activities in the North—because it's way down yonder and it's always easier to slay cobras in Borneo."

Not only may the Yankee liberal find that gratitude is in short supply; he may find that even the most charitable Negro is apt to