

October 10, 1965

Box 9  
Folder II B  
UCLA

Dear SNCC-people,

We are in Accra, Ghana where the attention of the people is all turned towards the O.A.U. Conference. The Organization of African Unity is seen by people throughout the world to be an important development in International Affairs. Most people feel that Africa as a whole can only develop as a strong continent if the nations within it band together economically and politically. They feel that Africans have a common destiny and are therefore "one people". Nkrumah, President of Ghana, has been one of the spearheads in the drive towards unity and the people of Ghana are particularly aware of the importance of the O.A.U. In Accra, the capital of Ghana, a new building called the State House was built in 10 months! The structure is fantastic! It was built to house this years O.A.U. Summit Conference (the third). The people in Accra are wearing T-Shirts with O.A.U. written on them. The main thoroughfares have the symbols and pictures of heads of the 36 African states on them. Slogans also line these streets; such as, "Africa must unite" and "One people, One destiny, One continent", and "Down with Neo-Colonialism." Bob and I have been working to get official "observer" recognition from the conference. The O.A.U. has what it calls the "Committee of Nine" which is made up of the nationalists groups in Africa, or the "freedom fighters" as they are called here. These people are engaged in actual fighting in their, yet unfree, countries, such as Mozambique, Angola, and Portuguese Guinea and others.

The politics of African Unity is very difficult as the African nations range from Liberia and Ivory Coast (tied to the United States) to Ghana, Guinea, and Mali which preach nonalignment, are working towards socialism, and associate the United States with imperialism. The difficulty is that the progressive states like Ghana and Guinea are also those which are pushing hardest for African Unity. What this means is that they are often in the position of softening their political stances in order to increase the opportunities for United action. For instance, a large question looms around what the conference will say about Vietnam. Most of the states are opposed to the war but at the same time cannot afford to openly attack the United States. The resolution which the conference passed on Southern Rhodesia was not as strong as alot of people had hoped.

In Accra, there are quite a number of Afro-Americans who are living here for various reasons. Some consider themselves "revolutionaries" and say that they will return to the States someday to organize. John Lewis and Don Harris left a very good impression here among this group. It seems that Malcolm X left a fantastic impression among the Ghanaians and other Africans. People ask us why Afro-Americans don't know more about Africa. Most of them call the war in Vietnam a "mass-massacre." The Afro-Americans here seem to feel that the movement in the states must associate itself with broader questions, particularly Vietnam. Of course, not being in the states they don't know how difficult that is.

The people here would like to get information about our movement on a regular basis and things should be sent to: Julian Mayfield, c/o African Review, Bureau of African Affairs, Accra, Ghana, West Africa - Les Lacy, University of Ghana, South Legon, Ghana, West Africa.

Ghana is mostly a Christian country and it already has a Christmas season - with all the advertising that goes with it. It has a large department store in downtown Accra which boasts of an escalator. Needless to say we found it somewhat disappointing to find all the advertising.

The national consciousness of the people is strong and through the person of Nkrumah and the mystique and cult which surrounds him this is achieved. Such a consciousness is a very important step in the development of a new country and many of the African Nations have developed similiarly.

I have found Children's books which should help us alot back home. We are trying to get subscriptions to magazines which are published here in Ghana for the Atlanta office.

I can't emphasize too much the importance of sending materials and letters right away! If someone there wanted to write an article we could get it published in the African Review.

There is a 3 month old T.V. show in Ghana now, run by Shirley Graham, W.E.B. DuBois' widow. We watched the news and its astounding how terrible the U.S. comes out in the World News. The Anti-Vietnam demonstrations got good coverage, and made us feel good. If the film "Ivanhoe" or any other SNCC film or film strip were sent here we could get it on T.V. Please send them right way! We are going to hold a forum at the Univ. of Ghana (where we are staying) when classes begin (Oct. 29th).