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Charles Griffin to Professor Silver, 3 October 1962

Charles Hudson Griffin

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VASSAR COLLEGE
POUGHKEEPSIE · NEW YORK
Department of History

October 3, 1962.

Dear Professor Silver:

As you can well imagine, you and other right thinking people in Oxford have been very much in our minds of late. I feel very strongly, and so do many of my friends and colleagues, that we need guidance as to what the ways are in which we can be constructively useful to people like you who are on the firing line so to speak. None of us want to be busybodies, but neither do we want to sit on the sidelines as spectators when things are going on which have so deep a significance for the future of American higher education. As college teachers, as well as as American citizens we feel that we have a duty that we are not yet wholly carrying out.

I know that some people would say: look in your own backyard where there are plenty of things to be done, even in the field of race relations. That is one answer. However, in the present crisis, I feel that the people who have spoken up for reason and moderation in Mississippi and elsewhere in the South are likely to feel isolated and that as much support and assistance as we in the North can muster must be provided them. Some of us have wondered whether the AAUP might not play a useful role in this situation and we are in touch with the national office to inquire about that possibility. It does seem that political interference in university affairs could be combatted by that organization. It is also possible that you know of some local group which is doing good work and which deserves financial support or some other kind of cooperation.

If you could find the time to write me even a brief reply to this inquiry it would be most deeply appreciated. Paul Pfuetze, the head of our religion department is also writing you, I believe, and also to other friends in Georgia who may also be better informed than we are of ways we might be useful. If he writes, too, one reply would do for us both.

My colleague here in history, Carl Degler plans to attend the meeting of the Southern Historical in Miami. Do you plan to attend? He has been wondering whether historians might possibly come out as a group with regard for the invalidity today of the interposition doctrine (whatever the rights of the matter were in the days of JCC.).

How is your Harvard son? My regards to your wife and family. I have not seen much of Frank Freidel of late. You probably heard of the accident ^{to one of} ~~to~~ his younger children almost two years ago. As far as I know he is well and flourishing. He has a new daughter about a year old.

Sincerely, 
Charles Griffin