

January 5, 1963

James Ridgway
The New Republic
1244 Nineteenth Street, NW
Washington 6, D. C.

Dear Sir:

Many thanks for your letter. I've read Mr. Bickel's article and can't say that I'm too fond of it either.

If I'm correct, you're interested in two things. One, the statistical accounts of beatings administered to staff members, arrests, intimidations, etc., and an account of the racial incidents which have occurred in areas where we have been working.

We've just returned from a five-day retreat in Dorchester, Georgia, which brought together for the first time all of our fifty-some full and part-time staff members. We had them to write out short biographical sketches, and for the first time we have an almost complete idea of the number of times we have been collectively arrested, beaten, and intimidated.

The average SNCC worker has been arrested four times. In all probability, he has also been threatened by a policeman and may have been shot at.

While we're not reaching for records, McDew holds ours with 27 times in jail, and Bill Hansen, a white SNCC Field Secretary from Cincinnati, Ohio, is second with 17, the latest on November 29, 1962 in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Several of our staff members are products of CORE's ill fated Freedom Rides; that is, they were among the students - mostly from Nashville, who continued the rides from Montgomery to Jackson after CORE abandoned the project as "too dangerous." Also, most of them had been arrested once or twice in their own homes while they were members of their local protest groups, before they came to SNCC.

The experience of one is typical. Charles Melvin Sherrard, who received his B. A. from Virginia Union University in 1958 and his B. D. from Virginia Union's School of religion in June, 1961, was assured the assistant pastorate at a large church after graduation.

Instead, he went on the Freedom Rides, and after his release from Parchman Penitentiary stayed on in Mississippi working for SNCC until the state took out a warrant charging him with "contributing to the delinquency of minors." He has been living in Southwest Georgia since October, 1961. He, and Cordell Reagan and Charles Jones, started the protests which lead to the formation of the Albany Movement, and now is the head of SNCC's vote project in Lee, Terrell, Baker and Daugherty Counties. Sherrard has been arrested in Virginia, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, and several times in Georgia.

Incidents of harrassment and the occasional jailings are hard to keep up with. Bill Hansen struggled for an hour filling out his form, and had to ask several people before he was sure about his dates of incarceration.

I'm going to try to list for you a table of arrests and jailings. I'm ashamed that I didn't already have such a table ready, and that this material isn't at my fingertips as it should be.

A word of preface: SNCC never had a field staff until Robert Moses went into the Delta in the summer of 1961. He had made such a trip before, but this time he went to stay. Although several staff members were arrested in their home towns and on the Freedom Rides, I date SNCC's field staff from Moses in Mississippi.

August 15, 1961 Robert Moses was arrested as he accompanied three people to the registrar's office in Liberty, Mississippi.

August 26 Curtis Hayes, Hellis Watkins, natives of McComb, were arrested at an F. W. Woolworth lunch counter. Hayes and Watkins were volunteer workers, staff last summer, and are now trying to complete their education

August 29 Moses was attacked by Billy Jack Gaston, son of a sheriff. Again, Moses was accompanying potential registrants. This time - perhaps the first time in Mississippi - Moses filed assault and battery charges against his assailant, but lost, and was warned to leave the courtroom where the case was heard to escape being lynched.

September 5 Travis Britt suffered 18 blows in his right eye from a white attacker. Britt was also accompanying Negroes to register.

September 7 John Hardy was struck on the back of his head with a pistol by the Tylertown, Miss. registrar. When Hardy, bleeding, stumbled into the street to report the incident, he was arrested and charged with inciting to riot.

September 25 Herbert Lee - 52 years old, a member of the NAACP, and a volunteer worker in the SNCC drive - was shot and killed by State Representative B. H. Hurst. Hurst was never arrested, never charged, and a coroner's jury ruled the slaying justifiable.

October 4 SNCC staffers Bob Moses, Charles McDew, and Bob Zellner (white) were arrested on the McComb courthouse steps and charged with contributing. Zellner was held by a policeman while the mob beat him.

October 5 Charles Sherrod and Cordell Reagan were both picked up on the streets of McComb and charged with contributing. Sherrod was thrown into the police car.

November 1 Charles Jones, Bernard Lafayette, James Forman arrested at a Trailways Bus Station Lunch Counter in Atlanta, Georgia. This was the day that the ICC ruling went into effect.

November 28 Warrants, signed by Dr. Dennis, president of Albany (Ga.) State College, are taken out against Charles...

- and Cordell Reagan. Sherrod is arrested and spends one night in jail. (Charge) "trespassing with intent to mob students to demonstrate."
- November 22 Bertha Gober and Klanton Hall, arrested in the white waiting room of the Albany Bus Station. Both were subsequently expelled from Albany State.
- December 10 11 people arrested outside the Albany Train Station (in the next week, over 700 Negroes were jailed) Sherrod was beaten in the Dawson jail by Sheriff E. T. Matthews
- January 19, 1962 Charles Jones and Charles Sherrod arrested "for loitering" in the Albany Bus Station.
- January 20 SNCC staffer Hill Hansen, working in Cambridge, Maryland, was told by a friendly white man that a \$1000 price had been placed on his head. Hansen, who is white, was beaten on this date by a mob of 300 persons.
- On January 22 I was told by an official of the ICC in Washington that the ICC could not enforce its ruling. This was sixty days after the ruling went into effect, and after several arrests at bus stations all over the South.
- January 27 White SNCC worker Bob Zellner was roughed up by a city police man in Huntsville, Alabama, while Zellner was photographing a sit-in.
- February 1 SNCC staffer Dion Diamond was arrested in Baton Rouge, La., on the campus of Southern University. Charges of "trespassing and disorderly conduct."
- February 3 Roychester Patterson, SNCC volunteer worker, was slapped and kicked by an ex-Sheriff of Dawson, Georgia.
- February 5 Bertha Gober and Elizabeth Hirschfeld were arrested in the Trailways Bus Terminal in Atlanta.
- February 17 SNCC staffers Charles McDew and Robert Zellner arrested in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on charges of "vagrancy" after they visited Dion Diamond. Charges against all three were later changed to "criminal anarchy", carrying a ten-year sentence.
- February 13 SNCC staffer Charles Jones arrested in Albany for "letting an unlicensed driver drive his car."
- March 8 McDew and Zellner released on 10,000 dollars bond.
- April 6 Reagan and Jones arrested at a lunch counter sit-in in Albany.
- April 16 US Supreme Court rules that the Federal Government can move to block prosecution of a Negro if that action is to keep others from voting.
- April 28 Bob Zellner arrested in Talladega, Alabama on conspiracy charges. Held on \$25,000 bond.

April 22

Mrs. Diane Nash Bevel, arrested in Jackson, Mississippi on charges of contributing. She was then three months pregnant.

May 15

Billie Hansen faces four trials in six days in Cambridge, Maryland.

June 26

Kathleen Salynn McCallum was slashed with a knife on her leg in Cairo, Illinois on a sit-in demonstration.

May 21

Jesse Harris and Lavagna Brown arrested in Jackson, Mississippi for sitting on the white side of a courtroom. Both spent 40 days in jail.

August 1

Frank Smith is threatened by the sheriff of Holly Springs, Miss.

I could with a little research, go on further, and will. I'm sending this on to you to ask if its what you want, or if more detail is required.

Because, to some of our staff members, harrassments and threats are part of a daily routine, they often fail to report them to us.

I learned only last week that this summer Charles Cobb, who works for us in Huleville, Mississippi, was threatened by the brother of "Big" Milam, the man who admitted killing Emmet Till.

I have here on my desk a sheet of press releases which begin with the phrase: "Today the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee asked (either or) Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy or President John F. Kennedy to investigate..." there follows a description of a beating, threats made, shots fired, etc.

If you want more of the same, more documentation and detail, let me know post haste.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature: Julian Bond

Julian Bond
SNC

Several of our staff members are members of SNCC's all-India Freedom Riders that is, they were among the students who left Nashville, Tennessee for the purpose of protesting to Jackson, Mississippi and other southern cities as "Freedom Riders". They kept it up and were arrested and held in their own buses while they were members of their local freedom groups. I hope they come to SNCC.

The grandson of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who received his B. A. from Virginia Union University in 1968 and his M. A. from Virginia Union's School of Religion in June, 1971, has secured the ministerial positions at a large church after graduation.

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