

SEPTEMBER 21, 1965

EMERGENCY FUND MEMO TO NORTHERN OFFICES & FRIENDS OF SNCC

Atlanta has NO money and a payroll due this Friday, a \$2,000 phone bill that is three weeks outstanding, no paper and in all it is a bad situation.

If there is any money in your treasury, please send it on to Atlanta immediately.

Friday, September 17--Forrest City, Arkansas: 199 people were arrested here today in connection with demonstrations protesting conditions in the Negro High School. About 10:30 AM City, county and state police arrested the demonstrators, charged them with "disturbinb the peace on school property" (they were demonstrating at the white high school) and carted them off to jail. Part of them were housed in the city dog pound, which was filthy; part in the civic center; and some in the city jail. They were not fed or given any water for about 12 hours. When they finally did get food it was hardly edible because of the stench from a stopped up commode.

One SNCC worker was arrested at the Freedom House in Forrest City in the afternoon and was taken to the Mississippi County Penal Farm where he was beaten on the legs with axe handles by prison guards. He was charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor. Two other SNCC workers were arrested later that night on the same charges.

All the people who were arrested were given speedy trials that same day--without benefit of counsel. They had been protesting conditions in the Negro schools, demanding total integration of the school system, and an end to the fee system whereby the kids who went to the Negro schools had to pay fees for books, etc. If the kids did not have money enough for the fees they were told by the principal to: "go and pick cotton until you raise enough money."

This afternnon the students who protested in Forrest City are meeting with the members of the city school board to see how many of their 17 demands will be accepted. If the schoolboard is not agreeable with the most important of the demands, then the students will demonstrate again. The bail for the first set of arrests was up to \$225,000 at one point; a total of \$25,000 bail was paid in order to finally get out all the people arrested in the demonstrations.

You well know the need for funds so that work in the Black Belt can continue. Please send all available money onto Atlanta and begin work on fall fundraising programs as well as attempting to find loans for the SNCC bail fund and Mississippi Bail Loan Fund.