

NEWS RELEASE from:
STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
8½ Raymond Street, N.W.
Atlanta 14, Georgia
688-0331

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 16, 1963

90 NEGROES ARRESTED IN SELMA, ALA. PROTEST DEMONSTRATION

SELMA, ALA. --- Over 90 Negroes were arrested here today during a protest demonstration.

They were protesting the arrests of five high school students who had staged sit-in demonstrations earlier, and the beatings of two Negro youths. The demonstrators also protested segregation policies in the city.

The 90 persons were walking two abreast and ten feet apart in the direction of downtown Selma. They were arrested by city and county police, aided by members of a specially deputized posse. Among the arrested was Worth Long, Staff Coordinator and member of the Executive Committee of SNCC.

They were loaded into two buses, one belonging to the YMCA, and one a school bus, and taken to jail.

The five students were arrested while sitting-in at the lunch counter of Pilcher-McBride's Drugs and Tim's Cafe. The students, from Austin High School, also demonstrated at seven other lunch counters.

More than 500 students are reported to be boycotting the Selma schools in protest of segregation.

An affidavit received from Lula Brown, 15, stated that she was knocked from a lunch stool in the Carter-Walgreen Drug Store by the manager, Mr. Carter, and was "temporarily stunned and unconscious." While on the floor, witnesses stated, she was shocked with an electric cattle prod and hit by a man believed to be a member of the special posse. She was not arrested.

A 19 year old Negro was hit from behind and later required seven stitches in his scalp. Witnesses stated that he was hit by a member of the posse. No arrests were made.

The charges for the arrests of the 90 persons appear to be "parading without a permit." A recently passed City Council ordinance here defined a parade as "any gathering of three or more people."

John Lewis, Chairman of SNCC wired the Justice Department urging immediate investigation of "the officially organized violence and suppression of the First Amendment" in Selma.

SPECIAL WHITE POSSE FORMED

About 300 men dressed in old army fatigues, and armed with pistols rifles and shotguns, are reported to make up a newly deputized posse. The only requirement, according to SNCC worker Julian Bond, appears to be that they be white men over 21. About 30 members of the posse along with county police blocked off the Sylvan Street exit of the Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church today where the demonstration originated.

Prior to his arrest, Worth Long conferred with Colonel Ault, Commander of Craig Air Force Base in Selma to request that the city be placed off-limits for Air Force personnel. He also asked for a special Commander's committee to negotiate with the city on its segregation policies. "Both of these moves are provided for under Secretary of Defense McNamara's recent order to defense bases in this country," wired John Lewis, Chairman of SNCC, to Colonel Ault.

Another telegram requested Secretary of Defense McNamara to immediately investigate the rigid segregation policies of Selma and the refusal of the Commander to place the city off-limits.

According to Bond, only local reporters are present in Selma at this time.