

STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
360 NELSON STREET S.W.  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30313  
688-0331  
March 7, 1967

# FIFTY SEVEN SNCC WORKERS INDICTED

On August 17, 1966 about thirty young black people picketed the 12th Army headquarters in Atlanta which houses the local induction center. They were protesting the War in Vietnam plus the disproportionately high percentage of Black men drafted to fight what they considered to be a racist war. These young men and women had peacefully picketed the induction center the

two previous mornings where chemicals were poured on them and they were spat upon from the second floor of the Induction building. Nothing was done to stop this harrassment.

On the morning of the seventeenth police arrested twelve of the demonstrators, charging them with disorderly conduct, refusing to obey an officer and resisting arrest. Four of the ten young men were charged with assaulting officers. One of them, Johnny Wilson, was charged with insurrection, a state charge which carries the death penalty. The Supreme Court has twice ruled

this Georgia law unconstitutional but Georgia racists thought that they would try one more time. After Johnny's lawyer began to protest the charge, it was dropped by the state. Ten of the youths received three month sentences from Judge T.C. Little on charges of disorderly conduct, resisting arrest and refusing to obey an officer.

While in the city prison, they suffered continued harrassment by the white prison guards who forced them to spend long periods of time in the isolation boxes. Isolation boxes are concrete boxes which are seven feet long, four feet wide and seven feet from top to bottom. While in these boxes, prisoners are given only bread and water to eat. No toilet facilities were available and waste had to be passed in a gallon can.

All prison facilities were operated under a strict policy of racial segregation. There were separate sleeping and eating facilities for blacks and whites, both men and women. Black women were made to work in the kitchen for as long as twelve hours while the white women prisoners leisurely strolled around the prison grounds. On male work details, whites drove the tractors while the blacks cut grass with a sickle or the whites rode in the front cab of the trucks with the guards while the blacks had to ride on the

After they had served two of their three month sentences, an appeal bond for their release was issued. Judge Little, however, refused to free them. Following this action the black prisoners filed a suit against the city of Atlanta charging them with using Federal funds to maintain segregated facilities along with subjecting blacks to cruel and unjust punishment. Both suits were thrown out of court when the prison made preparations to desegregate its facilities and began to place beds in the isolation box. This was an obvious move by the city to preserve its quickly vanishing liberal image.

Johnny Wilson who is one of the ones charged with assaulting an officer was sentenced on February third to three years on a Georgia chain gang. The three other young Black men who were charged with assaulting an officer were fined \$400 a piece, and they have until the fifteenth of March to raise the money. All the young people arrested have worked in the civil rights movement in the deep South for several years. They have been on the front lines having been jailed and beaten before, but they continue to struggle.

Now seven of these young Black men have been indicted by the federal government on charges of injuring government property and with interfering with the Universal Military Training and Service Act. These charges stem from the August seventeenth demonstration. They were simply protesting the genocide of the Vietnamese people and the genocide of their own people in this country.

The police, the army and the courts think that these young men are traitors and have tried to give them the maximum sentence on whatever charges they could trump up against them. They now face a maximum of six years and eleven thousand dollars on the two charges listed.

These young people need your help. They need bail money along with funds to pay for legal costs. Will you please help! Send funds to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, marked BAIL FUND.