

## VIOLENCE FOLLOWS THE FREEDOM RIDERS IN ALABAMA

On May 4, two groups of bi-racial "Freedom Riders" boarded regularly scheduled Greyhound and Trailways buses in Washington, D. C. Under the sponsorship of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), their purpose was to test desegregation at bus stations in the Deep South. The buses crossed into Alabama on May 14 to be greeted by terror and violence.

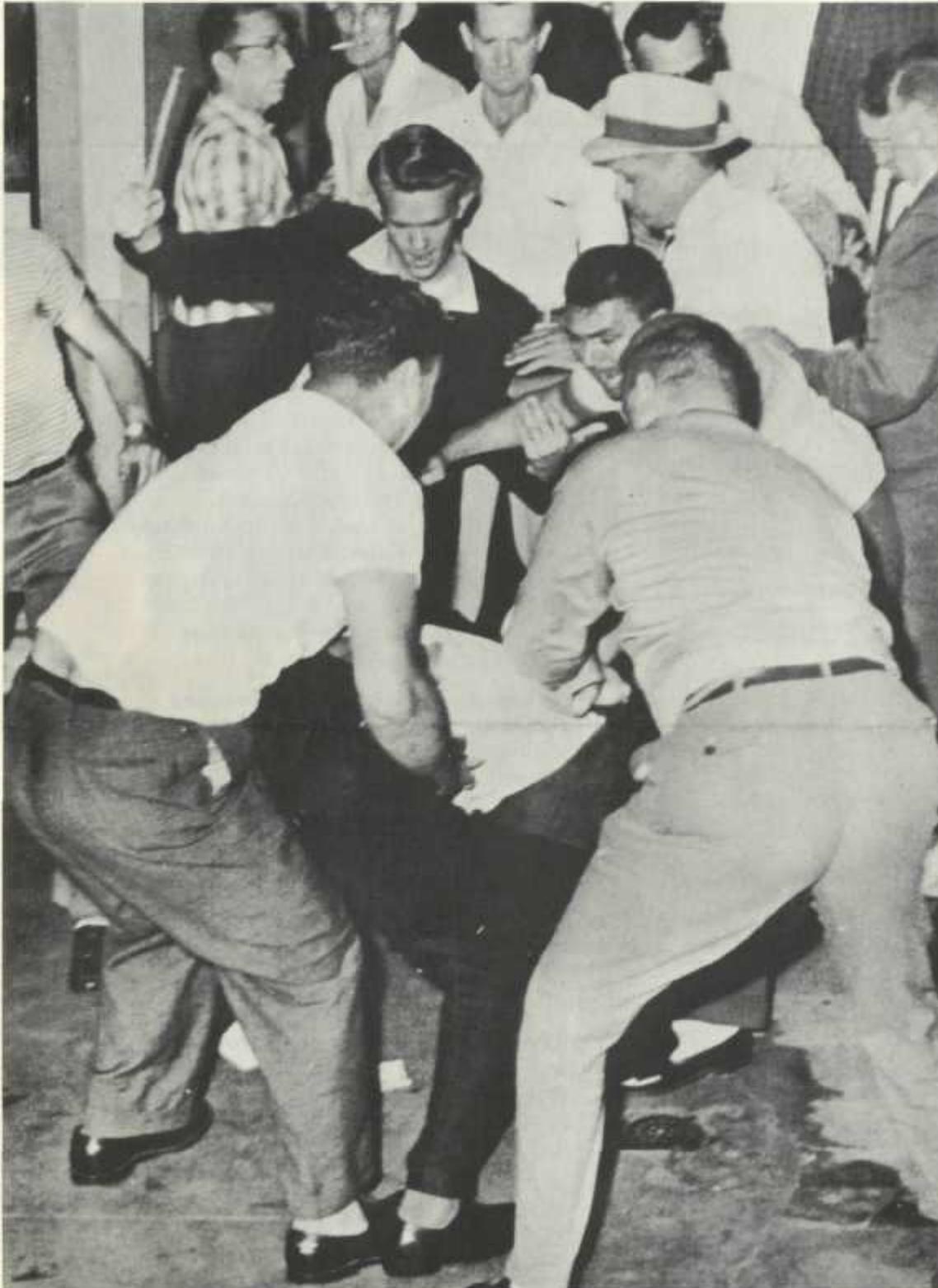
At Anniston, Alabama, the Greyhound bus station was closed, but a restless crowd of about 200 milled outside the depot. When the Greyhound carrying the "Freedom Riders" pulled in, the crowd turned into a mob. Rocks were hurled, windows smashed. When the bus managed to pull out, it was followed by a long line of automobiles. A slashed tire forced the bus to stop six miles outside of Anniston. The trailing convoy also stopped, and the mob grouped around the bus. More windows were broken, and a bomb was hurled through one of them. Smoke and flames forced the passengers to leave before the bus was destroyed by fire. Ten persons were taken to a hospital to be treated for smoke inhalation. As of this writing, CORE Field Secretary, Genevieve Hughes, is still hospitalized in Washington, D. C.

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In Birmingham, Alabama, another mob was waiting for the Trailways bus carrying the second group of 'Freedom Riders.' It was Mothers' Day; no police were on the scene. The police did not show up until Jim Peck and the other riders had been brutally beaten. (The group had been subjected to a similar ordeal as the bus was leaving Anniston earlier that day.)

Roving gangs of whites armed with clubs and lead pipes followed the CORE members through the Birmingham depot. One of them grabbed Charles Person. "Hit him!", someone shouted, and a fist was slammed into Person's face. As he struggled to get up, he was slugged again, knocking him into the arms of the hoodlums who propped him up for more punishment. Jim Peck attempted to intervene. He placed his body between Person's and the thugs' . . . and was mercilessly pounded, kicked and beaten. When the police arrived, Peck immediately was rushed to a hospital. He required more than fifty stitches before being released.



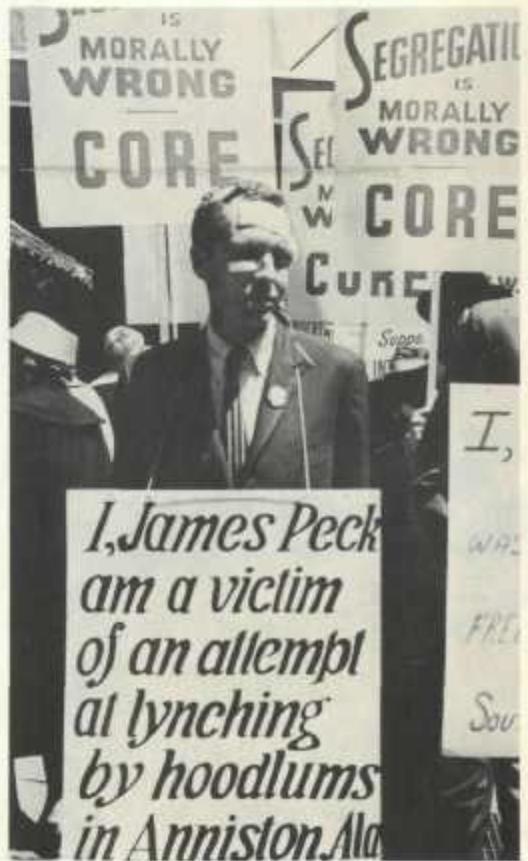


Peck and the "Freedom Riders" still could not get out of Birmingham. They waited for hours in the Birmingham bus depot, but drivers refused to take them on the regular run.

At the Birmingham airport, the group spent seven tense hours in the terminal waiting room surrounded by more violent mobs. One plane cancelled its flight, and then another. A bomb scare emptied out a plane as it was ready to take off. Still heavily bandaged and bruised, Peck finally arrived in New York. Although weak and exhausted from his ordeal, he was not yet ready to abandon the principles that sent the Freedom Ride into the South. That same day, picket lines were set up at the Port Authority and Greyhound Terminals, and Peck was on them.



Being interviewed during the Bus Terminal protests in New York, are Charles S. Zimmerman, vice-president of the I. L. G. W. U., "Freedom Riders" Jim Peck and Henry Thomas, and author Lillian Smith.



The impressive demonstrations at the two New York bus terminals were spearheaded by thousands of New York students and Union members. As of this writing, there are similar demonstrations in 33 United States cities protesting the continued segregation of bus and terminal facilities in defiance of Supreme Court rulings.

