

CHICAGO AREA FRIENDS OF SNCC  
(Student NonViolent Coordinating Committee)  
1316 E. Madison Park - Telephone: 268-5077  
Chicago 15, Illinois

The Chicago Area Friends of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee organized a Food for Freedom campaign which gathered over 50,000 pounds of food and shipped it to Mississippi about two weeks ago. We feel you should know the immediate reactions of the Negro and white communities there.

1. Three Negro business establishments were burned down within a few days after the food distribution began in Greenwood. Sam Block, SNCC Field Secretary in Greenwood, Mississippi, was arrested for saying to a reporter that he believed the burnings were in retaliation for the food shipments. The charge was "making public utterances that might incite a breach of the peace". He was convicted and sentenced to six months and fined \$500. He is at present out on bond.

2. February 28, SNCC Field Secretaries Bob Moses and James Travis, and a friend, Lee Blackwell, had observed a 1962 Buick parked near the SNCC office. They noted that it had no license plates. They entered their own car and drove off; about seven miles out of town the Buick drew abreast of their car. Two shotgun blasts were fired from the Buick, seriously wounding Travis. Moses was able to take control of the wheel, avoiding further injury. Travis, critically wounded, was taken to a Jackson, Miss. hospital.

3. Civil rights workers in Mississippi, undaunted by the terror, have pledged to register all Negroes in Mississippi.

4. Bob Moses, referred to above, is the director of the voter education project in Mississippi, in addition to being a Field Secretary for SNCC. On the night before the shooting incident he wrote us a letter reporting on the results of the food shipments. We quote from this letter as follows:

"The Food drive you organized and publicized with the help of Dick Gregory and others has resulted in and served as the immediate catalyst for opening new dimensions in the voter registration movement in Mississippi...The food is identified in the minds of everyone as food for those who want to be free, and the minimum requirement for freedom is identified as registration to vote..."

"...You dig into yourself and the community to wage psychological warfare; you combat your own fears about beatings, shootings, and possible mob violence; you stymie, by your mere physical presence, the anxious fear of the Negro community, seeded across town and blown from panelled pine and white sunken sink to windy kitchen floors and rusty old stoves, that maybe you did come only to boil and bubble and then burst, out of sight and sound, you organize, pound by pound, small bands of people who gradually focus in the eyes of Negro and white as people 'tied up in that mess'; you create a small striking force capable of moving out when the time comes, which it must, whether we help it or not."

"...In LeFlore County there are 11,400 nonwhite workers, 12,060 make less than \$1500 a year, and 7,200 of these make less than \$500 a year...Negroes have been herded to the polls before by white people, but have never stood en mass in protest at the seat of power in the iceberg of Mississippi politics. Negroes who couldn't read and write stood in line to tell the registrar they still wanted to vote, that they didn't have a chance to go to school when they were small, and anyway Mr. John Jones can't read or write either and he votes..."

"The weather breaks in mid-April and I hope you will be able to continue to send food until then."

Chicago Area Friends of SNCC will be happy to assist you in organizing your own campaign for food and funds. Just call us at 268-5077 any weekday.