

# OFFICE ONLY

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MEMO to: Friends of SNCC  
from: Betty Garman, Northern Coordinator

Enclosed is some additional material on McComb...plus a letter that was sent to summer volunteers urging mobilization of people -- communities, etc. -- around the issue of federal protection. The situation is obviously deteriorating -- the background information contained in the letter to Burke Marshall indicates that as well as the current information contained in here.

What we need is to build massive public opinion directed at the Justice Department -- letters, telegrams, demonstrations, obtaining statements by prominent local people (which can be sent as telegrams to the President and to the Attorney General or Burke Marshall and then released to the press locally), etc. Time is short but there is no doubt that McComb will continue to face violence, will continue to be tense -- until something of the nature of the Neshoba County murders occurs -- or until federal presence is again felt in McComb.

Demands on the Justice Department should be:

1. The general request for federal protection
2. Point out that there were 16 FBI agents in McComb this summer and there are only 4 there now.
3. A request that the election campaigning not make the nation and the government forget Mississippi.

AT THE VERY LEAST the McComb story should be publicized as widely as possible. The material here could be boiled down for leaflets for distribution in your community. Each night this week (and next) query the wire services in your area for news on what is happening in McComb. This will move the Southern offices to keep up on the story as it develops. Ask newspapers to print feature stories on the situation...ask radio stations if they will use some of the enclosed material. Use the "phone-in" shows in your community to alert people about McComb -- also ask that telegrams be sent to the President and Justice Department.

Mrs. Quinn, whose house was bombed on the evening of the 20th, Mrs. Dillon, whose husband is in jail (arrested the day after ~~xxx~~ their house was bombed in August) and Mrs. Bryant, whose husband was a delegate (Freedom Democratic Party) to the convention and whose home was bombed on July 25th (and whose brother-in-law's home was bombed before the summer began) will be in Washington today -- Tuesday -- for a press conference and in order to seek an interview with the President. A support demonstration is planned for Washington already.

THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
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TO: Friends of SNCC  
FROM: Betty Gorman

#### McCOMB BACKGROUND

McComb city is set in the southwestern part of Mississippi, an area which, in the last year, has come to be almost totally dominated by terrorism. Virtually dating from the late President Kennedy's "human rights" speech of June 1, 1963, the Klu Klux Klan, resurrected and intensively expanded, has been engaging in an active campaign of violence against local Negro citizens. The extent of the Klan's dominance in this area is evidenced by the horrifying chronology of murder, shootings, beatings, and bombings which have been perpetrated on the Negro people there. Since December of 1963, there have been seven known murders of Negroes, among them Louis Allen who had been active in voter registration activities in Amite County, and two young Negro boys whose mutilated bodies were found in the Yazoo River this summer. In Amite County, a seventy-year-old farmer and a mother of eight children were dragged from their homes by a mob of armed men and severely beaten. In Natchez, a local Negro funeral director and his assistant were kidnapped, taken to a field and whipped. In McComb, a local Negro mechanic was similarly beaten.

Numberous other beatings of Negroes by the Klan have taken place. In McComb this summer, a minister was beaten on a downtown street in broad day-light after he identified himself as a minister working for civil rights. Cross-burnings are so frequent an occurrence they are no longer newsworthy. There have been sixteen bombings in the McComb area alone since the start of the summer project, including the COFO Freedom house where ten civil rights workers were sleeping and in which two were injured. Eleven of these bombings have taken place since August 28 for the situation steadily deteriorates and the terrorists have come to know no restraints. There have been four bombings in the last 90 hours including the home of Mrs. Quinn whose children were injured, and narrowly escaped death. Finally, the House of Worship has become a special target of terrorist activity. In the McComb area three churches have burned to the ground, another partially burnt, and a fifth almost completely demolished by dynamite. In the Southwest as a whole there have been more than ten churches destroyed this summer alone.

Prior to the beginning of the Mississippi Summer Project, some 23 Mississippians came to Washington to testify before a select panel of distinguished Americans about the condition of terror, and to urge federal protection for Negroes, and for civil rights workers there.

COFO leaders all tried to seek an interview with the President, and it was to no avail. The murders of James Chaney, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman were striking evidence that their plea was unheard.

Before SNCC workers moved into the Southwest in mid-summer, a number of staff and volunteers came to Washington to urge stopped up federal presence in that section, based on evidence of a massive, armed Klan buildup.

Following the formal end of the Summer Project, and its movement into a new phase, the director of the McComb project wrote to responsible government officials to advise them of the increase in violence, and to warn of the prospect that the deteriorating situation might lead to more murder. That violence is now apparent, as is the fact that Negroes are being indiscriminately deprived of their constitutional freedoms.

This statement, therefore, represents a duplication of a number of efforts to make the public aware of the absolute freedom with which terrorists bomb, and burn, and use the official powers of state and local government to prevent Negroes from exercising their basic rights.

Urge prominent local citizens in your community to wire the Justice Department and the President. Organize precinct workers for Johnson to write and wire him as workers in his campaign. Solicit statements from local Democratic groups. Organize a delegation of local lawyers to visit the US Attorney's office in your city -- asking the US Attorney, in turn, to telephone a list of demands to the Justice Department in Washington.

All of these activities that you undertake should be designed to get publicity -- by the fact that you are acting -- for the situation in McComb. Add, as background information for your leaflets and statements, the information we sent earlier on the bombings and the September harrassments. Remember, too, in your protest, that nine white men, arrested on charges of possession of explosives (after the last attempt to mobilize the public around the issue of McComb) were released on suspended sentences just a few days ago.

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Additional information on the Tuesday arrests...

The first arrest occurred at 10:45 this morning when Louis Campbell, Buddy Solomon, local Negroes, accompanied by Rev. Don Blanchette from Webster City, Iowa were met at the Courthouse parking lot adjacent to the "colored entrance" to the Courthouse by five highway patrolmen (state), Sheriff Warren and several deputies. A plainclothesman with them identified himself only as a local businessman. Sheriff Warren read a court order from circuit court judge, J.H. Watson ordering the Registrar to close his office and to appear in court in his capacity as county clerk.

The three were then ordered to disperse. Rev. Blanchette, acting as spokesman for the group, refused, contending that the court order was part of a deliberate attempt to deny Negro citizens their right to vote. The three were then arrested for trespassing.

The later arrests -- under similar circumstances -- took place at 4:45 pm today.

This evening, SNCC project director Jesse Harris, issued the following statement in McComb: "We have been here five months trying to take people down to the courthouse to become registered voters in Pike County. We have been unsuccessful because of harrassment, intimidation and brutality by law enforcement officials and other individuals such as the recently confessed bombers. The people in jail now are there as a protest against such a system and its laws. They will remain in jail in hope that their being there will expose the kind of justice under which confessed bombers go free and Negro citizens, claiming their rights, are imprisoned." Harris branded the trespassing charges as ridiculous, pointing out that the courthouse and the adjacent parking lot are public property, and that a large crowd of whites was on the scene and not arrested.

On October 16th project plans to accompany Negroes to the courthouse to register were stopped by a similar court order, ordering the registrar's office closed for the day.

# OFFICE ONLY

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McComb...McComb

To: Friends of SNCC  
From: Betty Garman

As we all predicted things are getting continually worse in McComb. Two more bombings on Wednesday evening, 18 arrests for "criminal syndicalism, nearly a hundred other arrests for various minor charges or people picked up for questioning.

Once again we are calling on you to use all the the resources at your command to bring pressure on the federal government for some kind of action/pressure on the McComb officials to alleviate the presently serious situation. The enclosed information and analysis carries you one step further from the mailing(s) you've just received.

Again we are asking for a visable show of support from people all around the nation. Use the suggestions in the last cover mailing -- plus your own ideas. Several new ideas have come up since:

1. Try to get local Johnson for President headquarters -- the campaign volunteers -- to call a formal hour long strike during which time all the Johnson supporters would write letters and wires to the President demanding action in McComb -- now.
2. Urge local Democratic organizations to pass resolutions, send wires, etc. to the President.
3. If you demonstrate (or even in letters and telegrams) urge President Johnson to visit McComb as a disaster area -- to lend his support and encouragement to the people of McComb who are being harrassed, intimidated, run out of their homes, beaten, jailed, etc. Point out that there is a large Freedom Democratic Party element in McComb totally in support of Johnson but fast losing faith in their candidate.
- 4....and Most Important...Mobilize massive community support for the McComb people by a) getting prominent local people to make statements to the press, send telegrams to Johnson which can be used for press releases after the wires are sent b) asking candidates to take a public position on the inaction of the federal government or simply the present reign of terror in McComb c) having the summer volunteers in your area who were in McComb intensify their speaking engagements d) send prominent local people to the U.S. Attorney's office to present a statement which they would ask the attorney to read over the phone to Katzenbach or to Burke "marshall over the phone e) phone the McComb information to the "call-in" radio shows in your area f) keep calling news media for information on McComb -- get alot of people to do this to encourage them to print daily stories on the situation.

If you come up with good new ideas -- pass them on so we can inform other groups of what you are doing.