

CFO NEWS  
1017 Lynch st.  
Jackson, Miss.  
352-9605

Jan. 12, 1964

FACTORY FRONT

(A copy of this release was sent to the Attorney General and the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, D.C.)

Despite passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and U.S. Supreme Court decisions upholding the right of all citizens to peacefully demonstrate, law officials in the state of Mississippi continue to brazenly violate the law. Yesterday, the last of 13 persons who were arrested for picketing an illegally segregated public theater in Natchez, Miss. were released on bond. The following acts were committed by police and jail officials in Natchez against individuals working for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, the Freedom Democratic Party and the Mississippi Student Union.

Jan. 9. At 12:30 police make their arrests minutes after arriving at the Clark theater. The theater had been admittedly segregated-- Negroes upstairs and white downstairs-- despite the public accommodations section of the 1964 Civil Rights Bill. Women and teenagers are pushed to the police station although they offered no resistance. One youth, Clifford McFarland, 19, is knocked to the ground by police, bruising his knee. While in custody he is denied immediate medical attention. When he limps with pain at the jail police tell him: "Ain't nothing wrong with you, nigger!" and abuse him for not moving faster.

Police Chief J.T. Robinson threatens SNCC worker Miss Annie Pearl Avery when she declines his request to sit down: "If you don't I'll kick my boot right up your ass!" City policeman D. Witt threatens to slap her face. Police order her to remove her glasses and wristwatch. They tell her they are afraid she might cut herself. In protest Miss Avery begins a two day hunger strike.

add one  
NATCHEZ PROTEST

Despite near-freezing temperatures, windows are opened and the air conditioning is turned on in the cell where seven of the women are crammed together. They plead unsuccessfully throughout the night and early morning to have the heat turned on.

A white painter working in the jail is allowed to walk past the women's cells cursing the inmates and saying "nigger, nigger, eat shit!" This abuse continues until early Sunday morning.

Some of the women prisoners request sanitary napkins but are told by a jail official to use toilet paper. After about an hour their request is finally granted.

Sunday, January 10, The heat is turned all the way up in the women's quarters and the windows are closed. The temperature is unbearable.

We believe that the Natchez authorities violated the law when they denied us the right to peacefully protest. We believe they also violated the law when they injured Clifford McFarland and harassed the women in city jail.

We ask that the Justice Department and the FBI investigate our complaint. We believe that the following revisions guarantee our right of free speech; Amendments One and Fourteen of the U.S. Constitution and Title 18, sections 241 and 242 of the Federal Code. We believe that these same provisions guarantee our right to fair and decent treatment by police and jail officials.

We hope that the Department of Justice will act now. The incidents in Natchez were not unusual. Civil rights workers all over the south have been subjected to similar and often much worse treatment by public officials. But we believe that without much more vigorous action by the Federal Government than has been shown in the past, such incidents will continue. We are awaiting your reply.

Signed

Miss Lorrie Cress

Miss Janet Jemmott

Miss Annie Pearl Avery