

JUN 30 1964

COUNCIL OF FEDERATED ORGANIZATIONS
1017 Lynch Street
Jackson, Mississippi

June 27, 1964

MEMO

TO: MISSISSIPPI SUMMER PROJECT CONTACTS
FROM: BOB MOSES, COFO PROGRAM DIRECTOR: SNCC MISSISSIPPI PROJECT DIRECTOR:
SUMMER PROJECT DIRECTOR

Unless immediate and strong action is taken by the Federal Government to prevent further violence in Mississippi, we on the Summer Project staff fear for the safety of the volunteers, staff, and local citizens who make up the project.

As part of a continuing effort, which began months ago, to prevent violence in the state, we are communicating now with COFO contacts and with the parents of the students in the state. This memo will briefly give our analysis of the situation, give information on precautions we are taking within the Project, and propose some ways in which the Federal Government can extend protection. We will appreciate your disseminating this information as widely as possible.

I. The Current Situation in the State and the Responsibility of the Federal Government

A. The mood of Mississippi today is one of mounting tension. Acts of violence and near violence are increasing. We have enclosed a two-page report on incidents from one twenty-four hour period. The 16 incidents in the report show that violence is not limited to any section of the state and that intimidation takes an unlimited variety of forms.

It should be stressed that these incidents were not 'caused' by the Summer Project. Terror in Mississippi is a continuing fact of life; the Summer Project has simply revealed the terror. For instance, there have been five 'unsolved' murders of Negroes in the Southwest part of the state alone since the beginning of the year. There was no publicity on these murders until the Summer Project.

B. The Federal Government did not act quickly enough in the Philadelphia case. We are enclosing a chronology of the attempts of COFO to obtain an FBI investigation or other Federal aid in the Philadelphia incident. This report shows that it took 24 hours--undoubtedly the critical 24 hours--to get the Federal Government to act. FBI agents in Mississippi are always white, generally Southern, and usually from Mississippi itself. Like local law enforcement officers, these agents often serve to obstruct, rather than aid, the administration of justice in civil rights cases. The enclosed chronology deals only with Federal contacts; local police changed their story continually and were useless in the attempt to locate the missing persons.

C. The Federal Government does have the ability to act quickly and effectively in support of civil rights. The third enclosure lists some provisions for Federal activity in civil rights cases. It shows that the FBI does in fact have the necessary authority to provide protection for civil rights workers. Moreover, the President could act on executive authority to provide further protection, for instance through the appointment of Federal Marshalls. The report on the Itta Bona incident shows that the FBI does have the power to act quickly and effectively when it chooses to do so.