



# Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

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Washington, D.C., 20010

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The Honorable Lyndon B. Johnson  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

I would like to call your attention to the continuing grave situation in Mississippi and the need for increased Federal action in that state.

Since June 21, when the Mississippi Summer Project began, there have been at least 60 beatings, 8 unsolved killings, 17 church burnings, 13 bombings, 23 shootings, and innumerable other acts of intimidation, both against civil rights workers in Mississippi and the local Negro population of that state.

In contrast with this SNCC records show there have been fewer than 10 arrests by the FBI of local white Mississippians who committed acts of terror or intimidation, and inconsequential arrests by local law enforcement officers for the same reason.

Violence against Negroes and civil rights workers did not begin with the Mississippi Summer Project--Negroes have always suffered subjection and terror by the white population of that state--those who came to work this summer came to share a situation which is as old as Mississippi itself.

Serious Federal action in Mississippi should not have begun only with the Summer Project; it must certainly not end with the Project, but must rather be enlarged and reinforced.

There are two main reasons why this is so. In the first place, what appears to have been a temporary lull this summer, in large part the result of the shock of the Philadelphia murders, will not continue into the Fall, and has in fact already been reversed. In the last two weeks, acts of violence have once again been on the increase, and today the mood in many places in the state is similar to that immediately before the summer---a sense that the state is building up to some major act of violence and tragedy. It is known that the white community in many parts of the state plans to take revenge this Fall on those local Negroes who participated in and aided the Summer Project.

This in itself should be sufficient reason for a strong Federal presence. The historical terror of the white community toward Negroes must be

*"One Man, One Vote"*

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brought to an end.

However, there is further reason why the government should have an interest in strengthening its presence in Mississippi. In effect, the Mississippi Summer Project is never going to end. The Negroes of that state are never again to be abandoned. From now on people from all over the country will work in Mississippi to see that full human rights come to all its citizens. To ensure this fact, approximately 200 or one-fourth of the student volunteers have committed themselves to stay in Mississippi throughout the coming year. Assistance by medical, legal, and religious groups will also continue and in some cases expanded. The goals of the Mississippi civil rights movement will be the same as this summer's: to ensure full political rights for the Negroes in that state, including participation in political parties and the right to vote; to bring education adequate to the needs of the modern world to the Negroes of that state; and to create in Mississippi an open and fully integrated society. These goals have met and will meet with the firmest resistance, both from individual white citizens of Mississippi and from the law enforcement and political officers of the state.

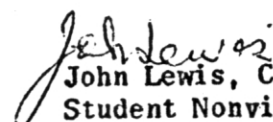
It is for this reason that Federal assistance is an absolute necessity. We have determined to do the dangerous work from within--the Federal government and the country outside must make equal commitments and take equal risks to do what is necessary from without.

This commitment can best be shown by the seating of delegates from the Freedom Democratic Party at the Democratic National Convention. Federal support within the state and the seating of the Freedom Democratic Party at the National Convention are inseparable needs. Without Federal support our task becomes increasingly dangerous, and more lives will certainly be lost.

But without seating the Freedom Democratic Party, and without strong preventive and protective actions by the Federal Government to give full political light to the Negro population of Mississippi, the Democratic party and the Federal government can never become the instruments of justice for all citizens that they claim to be.

I therefore call upon you as President of the United States to determine to begin now to use the full weight of the Federal Government to bring full equal rights to the Negroes of Mississippi to protect civil rights workers in that state, and to make your attentions unequivocally clear to the citizens of that state. I also request that you direct this same determination to all areas of American life where Mississippi Negroes seek full participation - including the processes of the Democratic party, and the means by which they choose their candidates and leaders.

Sincerely yours,

  
John Lewis, Chairman  
Student Nonviolent Coordinating  
Committee

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