Unit VII: The Movement

Purpose: To grasp the significance of direct action and of political action as instruments of social change.

Materials: Excerpts on non-violence
COFO materials on Freedom Summer
Charles Remsberg, "Behind the Cotton Curtain" (excerpts
Southern Regional Council, report on Greenwood Voter Project
"Voter Registration Laws in Mississippi"

Part 1: Freedom Rides and Sit-Ins

QUESTION: What is a Freedom Ride?

ANSWER: A Freedom Ride is a special kind of direct action protest aimed at testing buses, trains and terminal facilities--to see whether or not the seating of people on buses and trains is done according to law, i.e., the Supreme Court ruling of 1960 that segregated seating on interstate carriers and in terminal stations is illegal.

The second purpose of a Freedom Rice is to protest segregation where it still exists and to make known to the nation the conditions under which Negroes live in the deep South.

The third, and overall purpose of the Freedom Ride is to change these conditions.

QUESTION: What happens on a Freedom Ride?

ANSWER: A group of people--in the case of the Freedom Rides--an integrated group buy interstate bus or train tickets. By interstate, we mean going from one state to another. They board the bus or train and sit in an integrated fashion in seats customarily used by whites only. At stations, they use restrooms customarily used by whites only. They eat at lunch counters customarily used by whites only and sit in waiting rooms customarily reserved for whites.

QUESTION: What is a sit-in?

ANSWER: A sit-in is another kind of direct action protest aimed at breaking down racial barriers in restaurants, dining rooms, and any places where whites are allowed to sit, but Negroes are not.

QUESTION: What happens on a sit-in?

ANSWER: People go and sit where they have been denied the right to sit. In this case, Negro students go and sit at lunch counters, in dime stores and drugstores, etc. They usually sit and refuse to move. When this happens, they are sometimes arrested or sometimes the whole lunchcounter closes down and nobody--neither Negro nor white--gets to sit and eat.

QUESTION: What do Freedom Rides and sit-ins want to do?

ANSWER: They want to make it possible for people to sit where they choose, ride where they choose and eat where they choose. They want to change society, and we call these two forms of protest "instruments of social change."

QUESTION: What is society?

ANSWER: Society is the way people live together. People get together and they decide certain things they want--like schools and banks, parks and stores, buses and trains. We call all these things social institutions because they are the things people build as they live together.

QUESTION: Why do some people want to change society?

ANSWER: Sometimes, people build bad institutions. A bad institution is anything that keeps people from living together and sharing. Segregation is a bad institution. It is a bad thing that a few people have built in order to keep other people outside.

In the South, in places like Mississippi, the whole society has become one big evil institution--segregation.

If a good society is one where people live together and share things . . . then a segregated society is the exact opposite of a good society--because the whole purpose of segregation is to keep people separate. Segregation means separation and separation means a very bad society.

That is what people want to change.

QUESTION: How can you change society?

ANSWER: You can tear down the bad institutions which people have built and replace them with new institutions that help people live together and share.

There are different ways of tearing down bad institutions. You can write to the President or Congressman and ask them to help get rid of bad institutions. They can make a law against those institutions. For example, after the Freedom Rides, there was a law made by which we can force buses and stations to desegregate (ICC Ruling, September 22, 1961).

Also, in 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that segregated schools were unconstitutional. A Negro took the case to the Supreme Court.

So, you can try to get laws passed. Or, you can persuade people to stop building bad institutions. You can go and talk to the white people who make segregated schools and maybe you can help them to see that this is wrong and maybe they will change it without having to be told to by the government.

QUESTION: Does this really work?

ANSWER: It does not work very quickly . . . and Negroes have waited too long. Unfortunately, people don't change easily. Unfortunately, the government does not pass new laws very readily.

QUESTION: Then what can you do?

ANSWER: You can compel things to change?

QUESTION: How?

ANSWER: You can refuse to keep evil laws. You can refuse to co-operate with bad institutions. You can refuse to cooperate with segregation. And that is what the Freedom Riders and the sit-inners did--exactly.

The Freedom Riders said we will not keep that law which says we have to sit in the back of a bus because we are Negro. That law is wrong. It is wrong because all men were created equal. It is wrong because Negroes are citizens of the United States and the Constitution of the United States says that no law can be made which takes away the freedom of any citizen. Since the law about sitting in the back of the bus takes away our freedom, we will not sit there. We will sit in the front, or in the middle, or wherever we choose because we have tickets and we have the right.

The students who went to sit-in at the dime store lunch counter said we shop in this store and so we are customers of this store, so we will eat there.

QUESTION: Is there another way of changing things?

ANSWER: Yes, there is a way we don't support: to get a gun and go down to the bus station and take over the whole station.

QUESTION: Why didn't the Freedom Riders do that?

ANSWER: For two reasons. First of all, it won't work. Not for long. Because there are always people with bigger guns and more bullets. The Negroes in America are a minority and they can not win by guns.

The second reason the Freedom Riders did not take guns is that when you use guns, you are building just another bad institution. Guns separate people from each other, keep them from living together and sharing . . . and for this reason guns never really change society. They might get rid of one bad institution--but only by building another bad institution. So you do not accomplish any good whatsoever.

In the South, the white men are masters over the Negroes. No man--Negro or white--has the right to be master of another man . . . and the whole purpose of the integration movement is to bring people together, to stop letting white men be masters over Negroes . . . what good would it do,

then, to take a gun?

It is true that whoever has the gun is a kind of master for a while. It is also true that the best society is one in which nobody is master and everybody is free.

And, it is further true that there is a weapon which is much better and much stronger than a gun or a Bomb. That weapon is nonviolence.

QUESTION: Why is nonviolence a stronger weapon?

ANSWER: Nonviolence really changes society--because nonviolence changes people. Nonviolence is based on a simple truth: that every human being deserves to be treated as a human being just because he is one and that there is something very sacred about humanity.

When you treat a man as a man, most often he will begin to act like a man. By treating him as that which he should be, he sees what he should be and often becomes that. He literally changes and as men change, society changes . . . on the deepest level.

Real change occurs inside of people. Then they, in turn, change society. You do not really change a man by holding a gun on him . . . you do not change him into a better man. But by treating him as a human being, you do change him. It is simply true that nonviolence changes men--both those who act without violence and those who receive the action.

The white people in the South and in America have to be changed--very deep inside. Nonviolence has and will bring about this change in people . . . and in society.

QUESTION: What exactly did the Freedom Rides accomplish?

ANSWER: For one thing, because of the Freedom Rides, the Interstate Commerce Commission made a ruling by which a bus or train or station can be made to desegregate. This ruling came in September of 1961 just after the Freedom Rides.

QUESTION: Why didn't the ICC make that rule a long time ago? Why were the Freedom Rides necessary?

ANSWER: Sometimes, with governments, you have to show them a thing a thousand times before they see it once and before they do something about it. Way back in 1862, Abraham Lincoln wrote the Emancipation Proclamation. But Negroes still are not free. Just because there is a law on paper, it doesn't mean there is justice.

The Supreme Court said in 1960 that buses and trains and stations had to desegregate for interstate passengers. But in the South, nobody did anything about it. So, the Freedom Riders came to show the nation and the government that they would have to do something else. They would have to enforce the Supreme Court ruling. As a result of the Freedom Rides, the ICC enforcement was passed. If it had

not been for the Freedom Rides, the ICC would have waited a long time and maybe forever to do anything.

QUESTION: Why?

ANSWER: Unfortunately, governments do not do anything until the people get up and say they have to. What happened with the Freedom Rides and the sit-ins was that Negroes were tired of asking the government to do something . . . tired of writing letters and going through the slow process of the courts to get laws changed . . . tired of making speeches that never accomplished anything. SO THEY ACTED.

We call the Freedom Rides and the sit-ins "DIRECT ACTION."

QUESTION: What is direct action?

ANSWER: Direct action is just another way of telling the world what is wrong. The special thing about direct action is that it makes use of the human body--instead of just the voice or the mind.

Direct action is putting your body in the way of evil--placing your whole self on the very spot where the injustice is.

A segregated lunch counter is wrong. So, people went and sat down in the middle of it. They put their bodies in the way and they were saying: here I am in the middle of your lunch counter and I will not move because your lunch counter is all wrong. It is segregated. Either you will desegregate it (make a new institution) or you will just have to close it altogether (destroy an old institution) . . . I am not moving.

Direct action is putting your body in the way of evil and refusing to move until the evil is destroyed, until the wrong is made right.

Direct Action is saying, with your body, either you will have an integrated lunch counter or none at all. AND THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED. All over the South, lunch counters began either to open for everybody or else to close to everybody. If it opened for everybody, the sit-inners had succeeded in destroying something evil and building up something good. If it closed to everybody, at least the sit-inners had succeeded in getting rid of something evil.

That is the power of direct action. We call Freedom Rides and sit-ins direct action protests.

QUESTION: What really happened on the Freedom Rides?

ANSWER: Negro and white students working with CORE in Washington, D.C. and places like that decided that somebody ought to come down South and see if the Supreme Court law had made any difference and, if not, to tell the world about it. They felt everybody should know about Alabama and Mississippi and how Negroes are treated in these places. All over the

South, students were sitting-in at lunch counters and restaurants, courtrooms and offices. They had been doing other things in addition to sitting in. They had staged wade-ins at swimming pools, sleep-ins at hotels, stand-ins at theatres, kneel-ins at churches. They had picketed and marched, gone to jail. Already victories were being won.

It was time to try out the buses and trains. The students in Washington knew two things: one, that they had every right to sit where they wanted because they were human beings and two, that the law said every citizen who is riding on an interstate carrier can sit where he chooses both on the bus and in the station.

All they needed was an interstate bus ticket. They each bought a ticket. The first Freedom Riders bought tickets from Washington, D. C. to New Orleans, Louisiana. On May 4, 1961, they left--thirteen of them, seven were Negro and six white. One interracial team rode on Trailways Bus and the other on Greyhound.

They went through Virginia and Tennessee without much real trouble. They came into Alabama. The trouble started. About six miles outside of a town called Anniston, a white mob was waiting for the buses. The Greyhound bus got there first and the mob attacked. They slashed tires, threw gas in and set the whole bus on fire. Many people were hurt very badly. When the Trailways bus arrived, the mob tried to get it. This bus was able to escape and made it on into Birmingham--only to meet a white mob at the Birmingham station. The Freedom Riders were beaten up.

Police and patrolmen escorted the bus all the way from Birmingham to the Mississippi line. The bus came to Jackson. Police were waiting. As soon as the Freedom Riders got into the white waiting room, the police picked them up and took them to the city jail in Jackson. From the city jail, they were moved to the Hinds County Jail, from there to the county farm and finally to Parchman, state penitentiary where they served their time rather than cooperate with the state by paying bail money.

During that Spring three years ago, more than a thousand students made the Freedom Rides. Most of them were either beaten up or arrested or both. Bill Mahoney, a Negro student from Washington, was one of the Freedom Riders who spent a long long time in Parchman. Bill wrote about how badly they were treated there and how they refused to eat and refused to cooperate in any way. In spite of everything they suffered, these Freedom Riders at Parchman were determined to stick to their belief in the power of nonviolence. One day, Bill and some of the other prisoners, wrote this prison code which they all followed:

> Having, after due consideration, chosen to follow without reservation, the principles of nonviolence, we resolve while in prison:
>
> to practice nonviolence of speech and thought as well as action;

to treat even those who may be our captors as brothers;
to engage in a continual process of cleansing of the mind and body in rededication to our wholesome cause;
to intensify our search for orderly living even when in the midst of seeming chaos.

So this is what heppened on the Freedom Rides. Sometimes Riders would go back and tell everything that had taken place. Sometimes, they would write about it and tell the government in Washington. Before it was all over, the whole world knew how bad things really were in such places as Alabama and Mississippi. AND TODAY, because of the Freedom Riders, most of the bus and train stations in the South are opened to everybody. For those stations which are not opened on an integrated basis, there is now a ruling by which we can force them to open. This ruling was the direct result of the Freedom Rides.

Bill Mahoney and his group got out of Parchman Penitentiary on the 7th day of July in 1961. This is what he said about that day: "When we left, the number of Freedom Riders still in jail was close to a hundred. Before parting for our various destinations, we stood in a circle, grasped hands, and sang a song called 'We Will Meet Again'. As I looked around the circle into my companions' serious faces and saw the furrowed brows of the 19 and 20 year old men and women, I knew that we would meet again . . ."

QUESTION: Did the Freedom Rides succeed? If so, how?

ANSWER: The Rides succeeded in five important ways:

a) they showed clearly that it is not enough just to make a law; that simply because the Supreme Court says it is wrong to have segregated bus stations, these stations do not just integrate overnight (e.g., 1954 Supreme Court decision on public schools).
b) they showed the terrible truth about the deep South.
c) they showed those people who think social change can be made without suffering, that they are wrong. Men had to suffer a great deal, and still do, in order to bring about social change.
d) they brought the fight for freedom into the deep South.
e) they forced the Interstate Commerce Commission to do something--which it did on September 22, 1961. The ruling went into effect November 1, 1961.

Note: as late as July 20, 1961, the Justice Department reported segregation in 97 of the 294 terminals in 12 of the 17 states surveyed. After the November 1 order, there were very few still segregated.

QUESTION: What about Mississippi?

ANSWER: All over Mississippi we still see signs like "Colored Waiting Room" and "For White Only" in stations. We still see Negroes going into sections where they are told to go. And, in some towns, if you protest, you are arrested or worse.

QUESTION: Why?

ANSWER: Because Mississippi makes its own laws. It does not keep the law of the United States, not when it comes to race. This means if you go to a white waiting room, and some policeman tells you it is against the law--he is right. It is against the law. It is against Mississippi law.

QUESTION: So what do you do?

ANSWER: You break that law. You break it because it is both evil and is against the Supreme Court of the United States --which is the Law of the whole land.

You act on two higher laws--the law of human rights and the law of civil rights, because you are a human being and because you are a citizen of the United States.

QUESTION: What will happen?

ANSWER: In a sense, you do not even ask what will happen. You simply do what is right because it is right. Mississippi is a bad place. It is not easy to do the right thing in Mississippi. A lot can happen to you. But a lot happened to the first Freedom Riders and the students who first went to the white lunch counters. They did it anyway.

THE IMPORTANT THING IS THIS--unless we keep going and keep going to these places WHERE THE LAW HAS ALREADY BEEN PASSED IN OUR FAVOR--we will be cooperating with those people who want to keep us down. Every time you go into the "Colored" section, you are saying that Mississippi is right.

When you say Mississippi is right, you are saying one thing and one thing only: I am wrong. If Mississippi is right, then Negroes are inferior.

No, Mississippi is dead wrong. BUT YOU HAVE TO SAY SO. Every time you go to the back door, you are building up segregation. Mississippi likes to say 'our Negroes are happy. They do not want changes.'

And every time you go where they want you to go, you are saying exactly the same thing. And it is not true.

QUESTION: Then what?

ANSWER: Then, if you are arrested, you get in touch with as many people as you can--COFO, the Department of Justice, the Department of Commerce, lawyers, the Civil Rights Commission. You appeal the case. You file suit against the state of Mississippi. You get the case into a federal court and out of the state courts. You fight it until some court orders that bus station to desegregate, and sees that it does.

QUESTION: Has anybody ever done this in Mississippi?

ANSWER: Yes. A Negro in McComb, Mississippi filed a suit against the state, asking that the bus station in McComb be forced to desegregate. Recently, U. S. District Court Judge Sidney Mize issued an injunction against the state to force them to stop segregating that bus station.

We will do this to every station in every town in Mississippi if we have to. The Freedom Rides did a lot, but they were only a beginning. They got the law completely on our side. It is up to us to use that law and force a change in Mississippi.

QUESTION: What is the story on the sit-ins?

ANSWER: The sit-ins, as we know them, began on February 1, 1960, when four freshmen from North Carolina A. and T. College in Greensboro, North Carolina took seats at the lunch counter of Woolworth's Dime Store in downtown Greensboro.

Within a week, the sit-in movement had spread to seven other towns in North Carolina and within six weeks, the movement covered every southern state except Mississippi.

The first success came on the 7th of March, 1960--only five weeks after the very first sit-in. On March 7, three drugstores in Salisbury, North Carolina desegregated their lunch counters.

Sit-ins continued and increased all that summer. By September, it was estimated that 70,000 students had been in sit-ins in every southern state as well as Nevada, Illinois, and Ohio; and that 3,600 had been arrested.

AND that one or more eating places in 108 southern cities had been desegregated as a result of sit-ins. (Southern Regional Council figures)

To grasp the happenings of 1960, you must feel the revolutionary spirit which swept across the campuses of hundreds of Negro colleges and high schools in the South. Four students went to Woolworth's. Then, twenty went in another town. Then, two hundred went in a third town. It spread like wildfire--unplanned, spontaneous, revolutionary. Within a week after the first sit-in, the entire South was in an uproar. It was like a volcano had erupted, cracking through the earth and flooding the plains.

SO, SEGREGATION BEGAN TO BREAK DOWN. The old institutions crumbled. The new society was being created. A fantastic spirit was felt--people went to jail, left schools, left home, filled the streets and the jails. The seams which had for so long held together the rotten system, broke completely and the people came pouring out. There was no way to stop them.

Police tried. Parents tried. Teachers tried. The South tried. They did not stop. Every attempt to stop them only

increased their determination. Until thousands of students became involved that summer of 1960 . . . and the South and the nation began to listen. They had to listen. These students put their bodies in the way and would not move.

THAT is how they got the attention of the world.

Once they had got the world's attention, they never let it go. The minute somebody would forget about them and turn the other way, the students would do something new. There was fantastic creativity. Sit-ins gave birth to kneel-ins and to wade-ins and to sleep-ins.

The students were everywhere . . . and nobody could forget them. Nobody could forget the Negro and his grievances. If a man went to the movie to escape the sit-in at the lunch counter, he ran into the line of stand-inners at the movie. If he went to the hotel to sleep, there they were. Everywhere . . . everywhere so that nobody would forget for one minute that the American Negro wanted his freedom and wanted it right then and there.

Students who were involved in those early days can talk on and on all day--can tell you what happened in Nashville the morning in May when 3000 students marched in silence to the Mayor's office to present their demands, can tell you what happened in Orangeburg on Black Friday when hundreds of students from South Carolina State and Claflin Colleges were thrown in stockades and crushed with water from fire hoses, can tell you about North Carolina opening up, and Virginia closing its schools, and Alabama fighting back, about a thousand little lunch counters in a thousand towns across the South, can tell you how society began to change, how southern society began to collapse altogether, can tell you about nonviolence and about violence because they felt plenty of violence in jails and on the streets of America.

And all of this is still happening. It is just beginning to happen in Mississippi. We are living in the middle of the revolution and in the middle of a new history. . .

When you talk about what happened in the sit-in movement, you are talking about a living moving force that still exists. Because of the great dynamic of the movement, one cannot do more than capture a moment here and there, a victory in Greensboro, an event in Atlanta . . . one can talk about the songs and the people who make up this movement . . . but, most of all, one can feel the spirit.

Some special things which happened can be described now--such as the spring of 1960 when it all began and the birth of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee--"Snick".

QUESTION: What is the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee?

ANSWER: SNCC is a group of students who work full-time for civil rights, all over America.

QUESTION: How did it begin?

ANSWER: The first sit-in was in February. In six weeks, the movement was covering the South. In April, Miss Ella Baker who had been fighting for the rights of Negroes for many years, arranged for the sit-inners to come to Atlanta and talk about what was happening. So they came--right from jail, many of them, and met each other for the first time. For the first time, together, we sang We Shall Overcome . . . and for the first time, we recognized that we had begun a revolution. The students who came to that meeting wanted a committee that would stay in touch with all the towns where things were happening, would tell the nation, and would help keep things going through the summer. Each state named someone to be on this committee which was called the Temporary Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

SNCC met each month that summer, opened an office in Atlanta, started a newsletter called THE STUDENT VOICE, and made plans for a southwide student movement conference to be held in the fall.

At that October 1960 Conference, SNCC was made a permanent committee. SNCC today has its headquarters in Atlanta still, with offices in every state in the South and Friends of SNCC offices all over the north and west. SNCC has offices in every major town in the state of Mississippi. And this summer, more than 2000 people will be working for SNCC.

That's a long way since June 1960 when we set up an office in the corner of another office and there were only two of us then.

QUESTION: What does SNCC do in Mississippi?

ANSWER: In Mississippi, SNCC is a part of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), which is all the people who want freedom.

COFO has two main purposes in Mississippi: voter registration and education.

QUESTION: Do we have sit-ins in Mississippi?

ANSWER: Yes, there have been sit-ins in Mississippi--and, of course, the Freedom Rides came through and were stopped in Mississippi. In Jackson, students of Tougaloo College, have been kneeling-in at Jackson churches all year. Many people have been arrested.

The people have concentrated on other things in Mississippi. There have been very few direct action protests, such as sit-ins, in comparison with other southern states.

QUESTION: Why are the people doing a different thing in Mississippi?

ANSWER: They are operating differently in Mississippi because Mississippi is different. Mississippi is the worst state

in the South as far as treatment of Negroes is concerned. The thing that makes Mississippi different and worse, even than Alabama, is that every single thing the state has is designed to keep the Negro down.

Before Mississippi changes there will have to be a well-planned and very strong movement among the Negro people. COFO, the people's organization, is building up that movement. It just takes more "getting ready" in Mississippi.

The second thing people are doing in Mississippi is making up for lost time. All these years when Negroes had to live under the awful conditions in Mississippi, they lost the chance for good education. They lost the chance to understand government and to help run it--political education. They lost the chance to vote. Or better, they never had a chance for these things. COFO is building up good freedom schools so people can have that chance. COFO is having FREEDOM VOTES so Negroes can vote. COFO is helping the Negroes of Mississippi run their own candidates for Senate and Congress in the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

In Mississippi, COFO is thinking first of helping the people who want freedom get some control in the state and gain a voice in the government of Mississippi.

When Negroes have a vote, then they can help make the laws. And when Negroes make the laws . . . they will get rid of all the segregation laws. They will get rid of segregated lunch counters. They will get rid of the walls that hurt people--black and white.

There are several ways to desegregate a lunch counter. One is by sitting-in, or what we call direct action. Another way is by voting for people who will themselves desegregate the lunch counter . . . this is a kind of indirect action.

It is very good to desegregate a lunch counter--but it is also good to be elected to United States Congress. Mrs. Hamer, a Negro lady from Ruleville, is running for Congress on the Mississippi Democratic Freedom Party. Once we get good people from Mississippi in Congress, then they will change the laws.

QUESTION: Why doesn't COFO do both--direct action and indirect action?

ANSWER: They do both. It is true that there are not many sit-ins in Mississippi. One reason for this is that there would be so much violence. If students got beaten up for sitting-in in Alabama--they would likely be killed in Mississippi. Rather than subject people to certain violence for the sake of a lunch counter, COFO asks people to go to the registrar office and try to become registered voters. This is hard enough. This is direct action as far as Mississippi is concerned . . . and, if you get the vote, you have gotten something much more powerful than a lunch counter seat in the long run.

QUESTION: How can Mississippi society be changed?

ANSWER: It will take every tactic we have. Sooner or later, we will have to try all these ways of changing society: sit-ins, marches, kneel-ins, pickets, boycotts, voting, running people for Congress, Freedom Schools to prepare young Negroes to lead, literacy classes to teach people to read and write--everything will be needed to change Mississippi.

That is the reason for COFO. COFO is all the people who want freedom working together to change Mississippi.

QUESTION: Even with all this, how can we hope to win in Mississippi?

ANSWER: We won't win, at least not for a very long time, unless the federal government throws its weight behind us.

Howard Zinn, writing in the winter issue of Freedomways, states quite clearly: "I am now convinced that the stone wall which blocks expectant Negroes in every town and village of the hard-core South . . . will have to be crumbled by hammer blows. . ." Zinn sees two ways for this to happen: one would be a violent Negro revolt; the other would be forceful intervention of the federal government--and, Zinn continues, unless this latter happens in such places as Mississippi, the former surely will.

The federal government does not have a good record in Mississippi. Time and time again, in fact hourly, Negroes are denied those basic freedoms guaranteed them by the United States Constitution, by the Bill of Rights, by Section 242 of the U. S. Criminal Code . . . and the federal government has done very very little. (Section 242 of the U. S. Criminal Code, which comes from the Civil Rights Act of 1866 creates a legal basis for action and prosecution, says Zinn. The Section reads: "Whoever, under color of any law . . . willfully subjects . . . any inhabitant of any State . . . to the deprivation of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured or protected by the Constitution and laws of the United States . . ."

Zinn continues: "The responsibility is that of the President of the United States, and no one else. It is his job to enforce the law. And the law is clear."

The wall which the state of Mississippi has thrown between Negroes and whites cannot be broken down by us alone--it is too high and too thick. It will take the power of the United States to break that wall plus the power of the people of Mississippi.

QUESTION: What can we do to force the federal government to help us?

ANSWER: We can continue working constantly to show the world how horrible Mississippi is, and continue trying to change it. We can put pressure on the federal government--by constantly writing the President and the Attorney General and members

of the Civil Rights Commission, by going to Washington every chance we have and showing the President what we want.

That is the meaning of the March on Washington which took place last August. Hundreds of thousands of Negroes marched, with whites, to show the government that we are not free and that it must do something about the fact that we are not free. Mississippi people went on that March--and they carried signs, they talked about Mississippi, they got on radio and television--so the nation would know the truth and do something.

Our job this summer is to keep on telling America to do something about injustice in Mississippi. And our job is to keep doing something ourselves. We cannot afford to stop until we are free.

The favorite freedom song of the people of Mississippi has these lines:

We shall never turn back
Until we have been freed
And we have equality
And we have equality. . . .

QUESTION: What has happened in Mississippi so far?

ANSWER: The Mississippi story really begins to take shape in the summer of 1960. Robert Moses, a young Negro teacher from New York, came to Atlanta and went to work for SNCC. In July, he first came into Mississippi to try and find students who would come to Atlanta for a big meeting with other Negro students from all over the South. He did find Mississippi students, and some came to the Atlanta meeting. After that meeting, they returned to the state and Bob returned to his teaching in New York. All that year, Bob kept thinking about Mississippi and the students in Mississippi kept thinking about the things they had heard from Bob and from other Negro students in the meeting. After that school year was over, Bob came back to Mississippi.

Negro leaders in southwest Mississippi had been wanting to start a citizenship school and a voter registration drive. Bob went down to help. During that summer, he worked in Amite County, Pike County and Walthall County. Some people were registered, some were beaten, some were killed. The center of the work down there was McComb and the story of McComb is a very important story--because it is largely about high school students.

Things began to happen in a big way on August 18, 1961. The people formed the Pike County Nonviolent Movement. Eight days later, Elmer Hayes and Hollis Watkins went to Woolworths lunch counter and sat in. THIS WAS THE FIRST DIRECT ACTION IN MISSISSIPPI. Hayes and Watkins were arrested and jailed for thirty days for breach of the peace. Four days later there was a sit-in in the bus station. Three students were arrested--two of them were high school students: Isaac Lewis and Brenda Travis, 16. Their charges were breach of the peace and failure to move on. They got 28 days in the city jail.

Toward the end of September, Mr. Herbert Lee, Negro farmer and voter registration worker in Liberty, was killed. On the 3rd of October, there was a mass meeting. Many many high school students attended. They had something important to decide.

This was what they had to decide--when Brenda Travis and Ike Lewis, their classmates, got arrested for sitting in at the bus station, the principal of their high school, Burgland High, threatened to expel any students who got involved in sit-ins. The students got mad. They came to this mass meeting. They decided that if Brenda and Ike were not re-admitted to Burgland High, they would protest. Brenda and Ike were not re-admitted. So the very next day, the high school students marched: one hundred and twenty of them right down through McComb and up to the City Hall.

And here is what those high school students said:

> We, the Negro young of Pike County, feel that Brenda Travis and Ike Lewis, should not be barred from acquiring an education for protesting an injustice. We feel that as members of Burgland High School, they have fought this battle for us. To prove that we appreciate their having done this, we will suffer any punishment they have to take, with them.
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> In the schools we are taught democracy, but the rights offered by democracy have been denied us by our oppressors; we have not had a balanced school system; we have not had an opportunity to participate in any of the branches of our local, state, and federal governments; however, we are children of God who makes our fellowmen to love rather than to hate, to build rather than tear down, to bind our nation with love and justice, without regard to race, color, and creed.

Those Negro high school students were arrested--all of them --on that morning when they marched through McComb. Some were released on suspended sentences because they were too young. Those of age were sentenced and fined. Brenda Travis was sent to the girls' detention home for a year. And seventy-five of the other high school students transferred to Campbell College in Jackson, rather than go back to Burgland High.

That is McComb and the first big march in Mississippi.

Since that summer, three years ago, the people of Mississippi --who want to be free--have stood up again and again to demand their rights. All over Mississippi, Negroes have gone to the courthouses seeking to become registered voters. Some have succeeded. Most have not.

In Jackson, students and ministers who support them, from all over the country have gone to the churches of Jackson and asked to worship together. They have been arrested for this--hundreds of them. Some churches have opened. Most have not.

And this summer--the people of Mississippi who want to be free--are having a whole summer called THE MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM SUMMER. This means Freedom Schools for all students who want to learn about civil rights and to talk about the things they can't talk about in regular school. Freedom Schools are a big part of the Mississippi Freedom Summer.

Another part is voter registration. All summer long people will keep on going to the courthouses of Mississippi, and demanding to be registered as voters. In addition to regular registration, the people will have FREEDOM REGISTRATION. Freedom Registration is a chance for Negroes in Mississippi to show the world that they want to register and vote.

What else will the people be doing in Mississippi this summer?

The people will have their own community centers. A community center is a place where everyone can do many different things. It will be mostly for adults and will offer many chances for them to learn things to help them live better. The centers will have job training programs, classes for people who cannot read or write, health programs, adult education and Negro history classes, music, drama and arts and crafts workshops.

What else will happen during the Freedom Summer?

The people who want to be free will have their own candidates running for office. These are our candidates. They are running in the Freedom Democratic Party. That is our party.

The people of Mississippi have refused to cooperate with segregation. They are tearing down that old and evil institution and building new institutions--a new society where men can live together and share. That is the Mississippi story. . .

And, it is a story of victory. It is also a story of great suffering and death. Names like Clyde Kennard, Emmett Till, Medgar Evers, Herbert Lee, Lewis Allen. Like the sit-in movement, we have our stories of suffering and jail, of death and terrible suffering. And we have our songs of freedom . . . and our determination to BE free.

As far as Negroes are concerned, and as far as many poor whites are concerned . . . Mississippi is the worst state in America. But the people of Mississippi have done and are doing a great thing. They have built a new society, a statewide people's movement and for the first time, the nation is about to see what it means to have government of the people, by the people, for the people. . .

All across the South the walls have begun to fall. And in Mississippi, where things are so much worse, there is a whole new society taking shape. It is partly because things are so much worse here that the people have had the will and the determination to build so much better. When the last stone of the wall called Jim Crow has fallen, the last evil institution collapsed . . . we will already have built the foundation for a new society where men can live without fear.