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HANDBOOK
for
Freedom Army Recruits



MESSAGE FROM DR. KING

The Non-violent movement has made great strides toward freedom in the past few years; it is now time for us to stride into freedom. It is fitting that this big push into an integrated society, fostering representative government should take place in Alabama. Here our first steps were made in the Montgomery Bus Protest. Our major effort toward an open society occurred in Birmingham. Alabama then is the battlefield for Constitutional government. If the Negro doesn't have the right to vote in Alabama, then his future is endangered everywhere. If court orders and Congressional legislature are not enforced here in the deep South, then our American Dream has not been fulfilled.

I call upon you, men of good will, as did the Apostle Paul, to "give your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God", in loving service that we might redeem the soul of America through our action here in Alabama.

Martin Luther King Jr.

In Memorium.....

Herbert Lee

William Moore

Medgar Evers

Addie Mae Collins

Denise McNair

Carole Robertson

Johnnie Robinson

Virgil Ware

Cynthia Wesley

and the others

. . .who died

DEDICATION

When we heard of the tragic deaths of Medgar Evers, Herbert Lee, William Moore, and the young people in Alabama, most of us wanted to do something. We differed on what should be done, and most of us indeed did not know what to do, but within everyone of us in the freedom movement there was a deep concern that they not die in vain.

Let us rededicate our lives to the cause for which their lives were taken.

We embark upon and serve in this project with the knowledge that it is their sacrifices that inspire this program. We go forth with their spirits in our hearts.

In this way may the sacrificed lives of our brothers and sisters find Resurrection in us, the living.

The joy of Resurrection now replaces the sorrow of death.

They Live!

Wouldn't it be good if everyone in the whole state of Alabama interested in civil rights could get together and work for freedom at the same time?

We have been trying to fight in our own movements in in our towns. We are not moving fast enough with a few of us in many places trying to do something. If we get together there will be thousands of us and we can accomplish what we want. We are getting an army together. It will be a nonviolent army to fight segregation.

In a regular war people leave home, leave their families and jobs, leave school, or whatever they are doing and go off to fight. We must do the same thing if we are ever going to be free. We must leave our homes and whatever we are doing and join the rest of the people who will go going off this spring to fight segregation.

So this spring, 1964, on a certain date which will be kept secret until the time comes, a call will go out for all those who have volunteered to **REPORT FOR DUTY . . .** Schools across the state will be closed because the students will be gone to the army. Women and girls will fight this war as well as the men and boys. Ministers, young people, adults, everyone must respond to the call if we are to get free!

This is a serious business. Many people have lost their lives because of the evil system of segregation: Herbert Lee and Medgar Evers in Mississippi, the children killed the day of the bombing of the Church in Birmingham, William Moore, and all the young Negro men you know of, shot to death and beaten by white men in this state. With it in mind that people have lost their lives because of segregation,

Let us give one year of our lives for freedom.

That's right. We are asking everyone who joins to commit himself for one year to do work in this army. A year is necessary because this is not something we will do for a little while and then quit. We must finish the job and win the war.

There will be thousands of people coming from all over the country. You can't afford to be left behind. Mail your pledge card today. Enlist now in the Freedom Army.

OUR OBJECTIVES

What do we want to accomplish?

There are many, many injustices in Alabama, and we'd like to get rid of them all. But it can easily be seen that one thing has to be taken at the time.

One of our most serious problems is that in Alabama, Negro people cannot vote.

Much of what happens to all of us is determined by officials who are elected to office. These elected officials often decide what kind of job we will have or if we work at all, what kind of houses we have to live in, and what laws we must obey. They decide much about our schools, whether restaurants and other business places will be segregated or integrated and many things important to our everyday lives.

If Negroes voted, we could put the kind of Negroes and whites into office who would look out for the interest of all the people both black and white.

Negro people must get the right to vote so that we can protect ourselves and help decide what happens to us, our state, and our nation.

Poll tax, literacy tests, insults at the courthouse and all such things are for the purpose of keeping Negroes from voting.

We must, if we are to be free, make it so that any person in Alabama can register and vote without having to answer any questions or write anything or pay poll tax. We must see that nobody is required to have any qualifications other than living in the state and being 21 years of age. We must see to it that, if necessary, the federal government send marshalls to every registration office in the state to make sure that Negroes are not insulted or discriminated against in any way.

If everyone can vote, we can elect into office people who will help integrate schools, restaurants, movies, etc., get Negroes better jobs and housing and be more fair and just to all the people.

OUR WEAPON

We all know that there is a lot of injustice in Alabama, especially against Negroes. If we're going to fight it we need the right kind of weapons. Guns won't do, knives won't do, curses and threats won't do. None of these have ever gotten rid of injustice without causing more trouble. Nonviolent direct action is a way of overcoming injustice without becoming unjust yourself. It's a way of fighting hatred without hating other people. It's a way of conquering fear without being overcome by it yourself. It is not a weapon of the weak, for it takes a stronger person to use nonviolence well, than it does to fight.

Nonviolence is the attitude behind our words and actions. Nonviolence begins by remembering that the people who oppose us are human beings, in spite of the way they act sometimes. With this attitude in us, we treat our opponents as humans, showing them good will, even when we oppose them. We try to let them know that we are fighting against segregation not against white people.

With this attitude we recognize that there may have to be physical suffering before justice can come to Alabama and we pledge to take it upon ourselves rather than cause others to suffer. We do this because we want Negroes and whites to live together in justice and peace here in Alabama one day, and that day will not come by fighting and killing but by treating men as our brothers while insisting upon justice. That's what nonviolence does. That's why this army has to be a nonviolent army - - all the way.

CODE OF DISCIPLINE

1. We recognize that suffering is usually endured in the process of social change; therefore we will joyfully accept all suffering upon ourselves, even unto death. We will never retaliate or inflict suffering on another person.
2. We will refrain from violence of the fist, tongue or heart. We will never swear or curse or make insulting or mean remarks to any person.
3. We will always deal fairly with our opponent, no matter what he does. We will speak honestly and to the point.
4. We will always seek to know truth and to do God's will.
5. We will not resist arrest.
6. In the course of the struggle if anyone insults or attacks a policeman or any segregationist, we will protect him from insult or attack even at the risk of our lives.
7. We will willingly obey the orders given by our leaders or spokesmen during demonstrations because we recognize the importance of discipline during battle.
8. We will try to be helpful. We will be on the lookout for anyone who may need our material or spiritual aid.
9. We will observe at all times with both friend and opponent the ordinary rules of courtesy.
10. We will strive to be in good spiritual and bodily health.
11. We will always remember that the movement seeks justice, reconciliation, and brotherhood rather than victory over our opponent.

JAIL

Being in jail is an important way that we can point up a serious wrong. When we are in jail, freedom is foremost on the minds of our friends and relatives and they are more likely to cooperate and to act at this time. The issues of freedom or segregation is in the newspapers. Our being in jail gives others a chance to write letters, telephone and talk about the issue we are trying to point up. Our being in jail inspires others to demonstrate and often to join us. Our opponents are more likely to think about the problem and if we can persuade them they often change their minds in the behalf of justice. The attention of the entire country can be focused so that enough pressure can be brought to bear upon public officials to do what is right. Being in jail can bring about a crisis great enough so that people can not run away from the problem any longer. They must think about it and solve it. That is how we can bring about changes without harming anyone. Staying in jail can bring to bear the moral pressure of the country and world on the state of Alabama. In this way a freedom army will be of more service to the cause in jail than they could be on the outside. Each person in jail will have his own moral weight against the unjust government of Alabama. As long as he stays in jail he can keep his weight against the state and inspire others to put their weight against it. If our endurance and capacity to suffer are great enough, Alabama will have to yield to the weight of righteousness. Alabama will have to let us vote.

We will not be posting bond (except in extreme cases like serious illness or emergency) because as soon as we come out of jail our most important weapon, moral force, will be lost and everyone will go back to thinking about their everyday problems and living under the injustice as we have for so many years. Briefly, here are some more reasons that we will not be posting bonds:

1. As soon as we post bond, the fight is off moral grounds (our weapon) and into the courts (opponents weapon). Segregationists have legal strategies that are designed to maintain segregation, and they are in control of the courts.

2. The difference between a reckless, lawless person and members of the freedom army is that we feel that our breaking a certain unjust law or injunction or disobeying an official is so necessary to the cause of justice that we are completely willing to pay the consequences of breaking that law, so we are willing to serve our entire jail term.

3. When we are in jail, our families and friends are interested and act; when we get out they soon forget about freedom and the movement dies.

4. If workers on the outside have to spend their time finding and arranging bond, they have that much less time to carry the fight forward.

5. It doesn't make sense to get in jail and then want to get out. We could just stay out in the first place and not waste the time and bond money.

6. We've signed up to serve for a year. We have nothing to do in that time but fight for freedom so why hurry to get out of jail?

7. While we're in jail we're the state's problem. They have to feed us, endure the moral pressure from across the country, wonder what the movement will do next, and they know the movement is alive. We don't want to remove ourselves from their responsibility until we can be first class citizens.

8. Alabama does not obey the law. Court rulings mean nothing to them. So our appealing to higher courts and finally getting a favorable ruling may not actually do us much good.

HINTS FOR A MORE PROFITABLE STAY IN JAIL

Remember that jailing us is an attempt by our opponents at demoralizing us. Therefore, it will take everyone's co-operation in seeing that the group does not become down in spirits.

It is absolutely necessary that a daily routine or schedule be worked out by those in jail. It should include time for:

- a.) group worship
- b.) individual meditation
- c.) discussions on various aspects of segregation and nonviolence
- d.) cleaning up
- e.) recreation
- f.) free time

Try to do things in a dignified and systematic manner. It is well to have two people take food from the jailor and serve the others in the cell rather than everyone scrambling for his own. Take turns cleaning up and doing the various jobs.

Do not be easily fooled. Jail officials often say things that may not be true in order to demoralize us or start quarreling and fighting in the group. They may tell you that the people on the outside have given up and are not doing anything. They may say that some freedom fighters in another part of the jail said something unkind about you. They, in effort to make you want to post bond may tell you that everyone else in other jails and other cells has gotten out and left you. They may try to scare you by telling you you've been charged with a serious crime carrying years and years of jail. Don't believe or worry about any such things until you are told by one of your leaders whom you know knows what he's talking about. Do not repeat rumors that you hear without knowing that they are true.

Jailors may try to scare you by saying that they'll put you into solitary confinement or by yelling at you or talking loudly or by taking your mattresses or such things. Don't be frightened or fooled by such tactics. If you think about it, they are unimportant.

Don't leave one person "out on a limb" by himself. For instance if a jailor is about to take someone to solitary confinement, immediately everyone insist that he take them too. If a jailor should hit someone, everyone should insist that he too is guilty and try to protect the one who was hit. If everyone tries to see that what happens to one happens to all, individuals will be better protected and the jail officials will see that we are not afraid of them.

Don't pick fights with fellow prisoners or participate in teasing or conversations that may cause arguments or hurt anyone's feelings. Try to discourage others from such talk.

Write letters to your family and friends encouraging them to attend mass meetings, join you in jail, or cooperate in whatever freedom efforts are taking place on the outside.

Don't get excited at rumors or threats.

RULES FOR PRISON

1. A Freedom Army recruit should be a model prisoner.
2. We cheerfully accept jail discipline and its hardships. It's supposed to be rough. It's not supposed to be a picnic.
3. Always act and speak with honesty.
4. Cooperate with prison officials and don't break prison rules unless they are against dignity and self-respect or our principles.
5. We may protest and refuse food served insultingly or uncleanly.
6. Do all tasks allotted to the best of our ability.
7. Do not hesitate to ask for essential spiritual and physical needs, but do not be irritated if we do not get them.
8. Don't take part in improper joking with prison officials.
9. Don't bother trustees and jailors with unnecessary errands and asking of special privileges and favors.
10. Make no distinction between demonstrators and ordinary prisoners.
11. Ask no favors and claim no privileges which ordinary prisoners do not get and which we do not need strictly for reasons of health.
12. Apply the love principle to people in jail with you and do not be selfish.
13. We must do nothing to demoralize our fellow prisoners. Take responsibility for keeping everyone in good spirits. Do not take part in teasing or conversation that might hurt feelings or start a fight.

Clothing & Equipment To Bring With You When You Report For Duty

A. Clothing

Overalls or blue jeans or tough pants

2 sturdy cotton blouses or 2 shirts

(Bring one change; wear one change)

2 changes underclothing

Socks

Comfortable, sturdy flat shoes

Coat

Head covering (hat or scarf)

Girls--no make-up except for perhaps lipstick. The less you have to carry the better.

B. Other equipment

Toothbrush

Face soap

Toothpaste

Bible

Deodorant

This handbook

Bring enough lunch to last for one full day. This is in case of transportation delays, etc.

We urge you not to bring items not listed unless they are absolutely essential to you. The less you bring the fewer things you will have to keep up with and carry around.

The only item of jewelry you should bring is perhaps a watch. This is not necessary however. No other jewelry. No ties, no high heels, no nylon stockings. We are coming to work and to get our freedom, not to look sharp. However, everyone is always expected to be clean and well groomed.

If you have a sleeping bag, it will be helpful to bring it. If you don't have one, don't worry about it.

Get your things together now and arrange all of your business so that when you are notified, you can be ready to go in one day.

SUGGESTED READING

If a soldier plans to fight a war using a gun as his weapon, his life may depend on how much he knows about his weapon and how well he can shoot his gun. If we plan to fight a war using the weapon of nonviolence, it would be well to learn all we can about nonviolence. You will want to read the following.

THE POWER OF NONVIOLENCE by Richard B. Gregg

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE by Henry David Thoreau. (An essay)

CONQUEST OF VIOLENCE by Joan Bondurant

NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE by M. K. Gandhi

ORGANIZING FOR NONVIOLENT ACTION (A pamphlet)

MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH by M. K. Gandhi

The above are available from our office.

FREEDOM SONGS

1. Ballad of the Sit-Ins
2. We'll Never Turn Back
3. Which Side Are You On?
4. Follow the Drinking Gourd
5. We Shall Overcome
6. We Are Soldiers in the Army
7. Keep Your Eyes on the Prize
8. Oh! Freedom
9. Come on up to Old Glory
10. We're on Our Way to Freedom Land
11. We Shall Not Be Moved

COMMITMENT CARDS

Sign one of these cards. The other one is for a friend or someone you know who wants to join up. Mail to:

FREEDOM ARMY RECRUITING CENTER

712 Dorsey Street
Montgomery 8, Alabama

If you know more people who want to join, more cards and handbooks like this one can be ordered from the above address.

If you would like for someone from our office to come and talk with your group and explain the project more fully, let us know.

I do hereby pledge

Cut along dotted line

I do hereby pledge

Cut along dotted line