

Feb. 10, 1965

EMERGENCY NEWS BULLETIN

To: Friends of SNCC

From: Betty Garman

Enclosed is a copy of the WATS line report from today. It outlines tremendous brutality which is not a new occurrence in Selma by any means. Today, however, has been worse than other days and there, again, is not any sign that the brutality will stop.

On the back of this sheet is an outline of Monday and Tuesday events. The weekend was quiet. Last week's mailing outlines the background and events in Selma and Marion, Ala. since the Alabama campaign began in January.

WE ARE STILL ASKING THAT NORTHERN GROUPS LEND AS MUCH SUPPORT AS POSSIBLE. Use the suggestions in the last mailing. Particularly it is important to mobilize your community for protest. Whether you do this by demonstrations, sit-ins, delegations to US Attorney's offices, press statements or simply mass leafleting asking people to write and telegram Congressmen and Justice Department officials depends on you.

The MOST IMPORTANT DEMANDS as we see them now are, in order of importance:

1. The arrest of Sheriff Jim Clark.
2. A permanent restraining order prohibiting interference with voter registration activity and 1st amendment rights.
3. That the FBI use their power of arrest under Section 3052 of the US Administrative Code (Title 18) -- see last mailing.
4. Action to release those presently still in jail.
5. That the Justice Department press the five suits it presently has pending in central Alabama. The earliest suit dates to 1962.

Please let us know what you are doing. If you are having demonstrations call us the night before and we will relay to you the latest information.

Work out!

Betty

Selma, Ala. Monday, Feb. 8

In the afternoon, 59 adults, led by SNCC Ivanhoe Donaldson, Ralph Featherstone (SNCC) and SCLC Rev. James Bevel, and Selma Rev. Harrison, marched to the courthouse. They had with them copies of a protest grievance which read in part: "We are protesting for the right to vote and freely register. The order issued by Judge Thomas (federal) does not deal with the problem of Negro disenfranchisement...[the order provides for Negro applicants to sign a list stating their desire to register and also asks the Dallas County officials to provide enough registrar help to register a good number each day. Compliance seems to be negligent as yet[..."We must insist that 1) the only requirement for voting ~~xxx~~ be age and residence (eliminates literacy test, poll taxes, vouchers, etc. because they were instituted for the purpose of keeping Negroes from the vote) 2) the registrar's office be open six days a week....Any person should be able to register without harrassment, arrest or extreme inconvenience."

The people entered the courthouse lobby and were ordered outside. Once outside they lined up single file at the bottom of the steps and walked back up. This time they were cattle prodded back down the steps by Jim Clark's possemen. Ivanhoe was beaten and cattle prodded. Rev. Bevel was badly beaten and taken to the hospital.

At around 4:30 pm 300 students marched to the courthouse to protest the arrests and beatings earlier in the day. The students were loaded on jail busses and driven back toward the church. The students were told to get off the bus at which point they headed back to the church. Several others were beaten and cattle-prodded. Then a policeman in civilian clothes entered the church ~~xxxxxxx~~ about an hour later, arrested all staff members on charges of "contributing to the delinquency of minors".

Later that evening most staff were released. The adults were given a hearing in a local court and charged with contempt (breaking a local injunction against demonstrations) and sentenced to five days in jail).

Tuesday, Feb. 9

At around noon 75 students went to the courthouse to protest the arrests of their parents yesterday. All were arrested. At 2:30 pm 142 students walked to the courthouse with signs reading, "Let our parents vote". Deputies took the signs and sent the kids back while making no arrests. Ivanhoe Donaldson (SNCC) was then arrested while sitting in a car across the street.