

ONE YEAR LATER . . . A MESSAGE from

Nathan H. Schwerner

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STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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My dear fellow American:

It is just over a year since my son, Michael, was murdered together with his co-workers, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman. Many white citizens of Philadelphia, Mississippi continue to applaud their murderers -- who are still free.

Since then, others have been killed -- in Alabama alone, Jimmy Lee Jackson, Reverend James Reeb, Viola Liuzzo, and Willie Brewster, who was shot down by night-riders on July 15. I know you agree with me that such terrorism must be stopped, that racism must be wiped out. But how?

I am convinced the answer lies in the person of the Southern Negro himself. His ability to assert himself as an American citizen -- to throw off his fears and find his voice -- is essential. Yet we all know that 300 years of oppression cannot be overcome without help.

For five years a major source of that help has been the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Last summer, SNCC played the primary role in the Mississippi Project. Its staff and volunteers assisted thousands to attempt to register for voting. SNCC initiated the Freedom Schools, community centers and libraries which have been a means of opening the minds of black Americans to their own worth as human beings and as citizens.

Now we are in the midst of another summer. And a tremendous job remains to be done.

This year, SNCC has expanded its programs in Arkansas, Georgia and Alabama. Several hundred volunteers have gone to Mississippi. Many have been traveling to Washington, D. C. to lobby for support of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, which was born with SNCC's help. In this new party, more than 120,000 people -- Negroes and a few brave whites -- are finding a means of political expression for the disenfranchised. They have challenged, by law, the right of the five Mississippi Congressmen to retain their illegally won seats.

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That challenge has been living testimony of what can be accomplished when people, kept silent for centuries, start to find their own identity.

For those working in the Deep South, the threat of being jailed, beaten -- and murdered -- still hangs heavy. The Ku Klux Klan is more determined than ever to maintain racism.

But you can do something to prevent this. Lives can be saved by two-way radios installed in the cars and offices of field workers. I firmly believe that Mickey, Jim and Andy would be alive today if they had had such equipment on June 21, 1964. Now there are radios in Mississippi, but still not enough in Alabama and none in Arkansas or Georgia. A two-way radio costs \$250.00. Is that worth a life?

Another important communications link is the Wide Area Telephone Service, which connects field offices with SNCC headquarters. It costs several thousand dollars a month -- and is absolutely vital for both safety and disseminating news of what goes on from hour to hour.

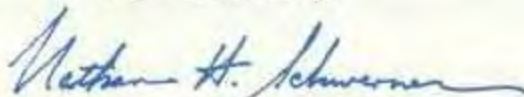
No less essential are cars, needed to take workers into rural areas like Lowndes County, Ala., where not a single Negro is registered to vote. SNCC needs many more cars than it has. And workers need their subsistence pay, even though it runs as low as \$10.00 a week. There must also be money available to bail people out of jail; and bail is set high by racist judges.

These are only a few of the basic needs of the young people working with SNCC, people who face danger and hunger every day. As Prof. Howard Zinn of Boston University has said in his book, SNCC: The New Abolitionists, "They are clearly the front line of the Negro assault on the moral comfort of white America. To be with them, walking a picket line in the rain in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, or sleeping on a cot in a cramped 'office' in Greenville, Mississippi; to watch them walk out of the stone jailhouse in Albany, Georgia; to see them jabbed by electric prod poles and flung into paddy wagons in Selma, Alabama, or link arms and sing at the close of a church meeting in the Delta -- is to feel the presence of greatness..."

These dedicated young workers are our sons and daughters -- they belong to all of us. We can't all leave jobs and families to go with them - but we can see that they have the cars, the medicines, the legal aid and the life saving equipment they need so badly.

Please send your contribution in the enclosed envelope, today. Send not merely what you think you can spare, but far more. Lives are at stake.

Most sincerely,


Nathan H. Schwerner

P.S. You will notice 5¢ postage on this letter. Time is so short, and SNCC's needs so immediate, that a good friend contributed the first class postage to get this appeal to you quickly. Won't you please send us your contribution now? Please make checks payable to SNCC.