

September 1, 1965

MEMO to Friends of SNCC

The reign of terror in the south against Negroes has stepped up since the signing of the Voting Rights Bill. And the Federal Government is not doing anything to control that violence which is growing. Just after Reconstruction, when the federal troops were pulled out of the south, the newly gained rights which Negroes had suffered for so long were practically erased by Klan terror and economic oppression. The same things are happening today thanks to the inactivity of the federal government.

Here are some examples of the reaction of the Justice Department when the lives of civil rights workers are in danger.

When Rev. Daniels was shot in Fort Deposit, Ala., there was a great deal of tension in both Lowndes and Dallas Counties. That night a mob formed across from the SNCC office in Selma. The witnesses were in the office. Right across the street from the SNCC office is the local police station and the city hall. When SNCC workers called John Doar in Washington to ask for protection, he told the workers to get out of the SNCC office and he told the witnesses they were in danger because they were prime targets and they should go into hiding. However, when the Washington SNCC office called Doar to ask for federal protection for the witnesses and for other civil rights workers he said there was no need for federal protection and that the witnesses were not in any danger.

Tom Coleman, the murderer of Rev. Daniels, is now free on \$12,500 bond. The Jury Commissioners who appoint the grand jury which will decide whether he should be tried for murder have been appointed by Governor Wallace. After the shooting, Attorney General (of Alabama) Richmond Flowers said that when Al Lingo went to Hayneville after being called by Coleman, there was a known member of the Klan in the car with Lingo. The Klan member remained in the car while Lingo was talking to people and left Hayneville with Lingo (Lingo is head of the Alabama State Patrol.)

According to Lowndes County Sheriff Ryals, Coleman was acting as a "special deputy sheriff" when he shot Rev. Daniels and Rev. Morrisroe. His family is very prominent in Hayneville. His father was once sheriff of Lowndes County and was superintendent of education at the time he died. Tom Coleman's son is a state trooper. His sister is the County Superintendent of Education.

Who is going to prosecute Coleman? What role does the Justice Department play in this case? What role should it play?

In Sumpter County, Ala., when people were being chased by a white mob, John Doar was called again. He told the people in Sumpter County that if they wanted protection, they should call Al Lingo.

When the Freedom House in Pheba, Miss., was shot into after a mass meeting, John Doar told the workers to get in touch with the local and state authorities.

What help can freedom workers expect from the Justice Department when their lives are in danger day after day and the man in charge of the civil rights division gives this kind of reaction?

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT A LAW THAT HAS BEEN ON THE BOOKS FOR A LONG TIME

THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1866 AND THE ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 1870

18 USC, Sec. 3052: The Director, Associate Director, Assistant to the Director, Assistant Directors, inspectors and agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Justice may carry firearms, serve warrants and subpoenas issued under the authority of the United States and make arrests without warrant for any offense against the United States committed in their presence, or for any felony cognizable under the laws of the U.S. if they have reasonable grounds to believe that the person to be arrested has committed or is committing such felony.

18 USC, Sec. 594: Who intimidates threatens, coerces, or attempts to intimidate, threaten, or coerce, any other person for the purpose of interfering with the right of such other person to vote or to vote as he may chose, or of causing such other person to vote for or not to vote for any candidate for the office of President, Vice President, Presidential elector, Member of the Senate, or Member of the House of Representatives, Delegates or Commissioners of the Territories and Possessions, at any election held solely or in part for the purpose of electing such candidate, shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.

18 USC, Sec 242: Whoever, under color of any law, statute, ordinance, regulation, or custom willfully subjects any inhabitant of any state, territory or District to the deprivation of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured or protected by the Constitution or laws of the United States, (or to different punishments, pains, or penalties, on account of such inhabitant being an alien, or by reason of his color, or race, than are prescribed for the punishment of citizens,) shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both.