



FREEDOM NOW

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1,000 ARRESTED IN MISSISSIPPI

JACKSON, Miss.—More than 1,000 civil rights demonstrators have been imprisoned here since July 14.

Among them was Robertson Wood, 29, of Toronto, who was released June 24 after 10 days in a concentration-camp-like compound. Paul Saltzman, 21, of Toronto, was among a group arrested that same day and Robert Lower, 19, of Rivers Camp, Man., and Toronto, was arrested the following weekend.

At last report, a federal judge had handed down an injunction putting an end to mass arrests and police brutality. The special session of the Mississippi state legislature which the demonstrators had protested had ended.

The situation in general had calmed down considerably. Most people had been bailed out of jail. Paul had been released and it was believed Bob was out of jail as well. Demonstrations continued.

Here Rob, a member of the SNCC Canadian staff, tells his story.

"THEY COULD NOT CONTROL OUR THOUGHTS"

By ROBERTSON WOOD

JACKSON, Miss.—Through the hole in the ceiling of the Jackson stockade you could see the hot blue sky. Sometimes clouds passed over. They were white and far away. They were part of some other sky. One that did not belong to us inside. Sitting and lying on the concrete floor with the flies and cigarette butts we watched the patch of sunlight under the hole move slowly from morning into afternoon until it was no longer with us. During the day there was no breeze and the air was still and heavy. It smelled of the over 400 white and Negro male bodies jailed for participating in the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party demonstrations in the 10-day period between June 14 and June 24.

The demonstrators were Negroes from all parts of Mississippi, white northern MFDP volunteers, and workers with SNCC and the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), an alliance of civil rights groups in Mississippi, financed and staffed almost entirely by SNCC.

We were protesting a special session of the Mississippi state legislature called by Governor Paul B. Johnson to bring the voting laws in Mississippi more in line with those proposed in the 1965 federal voting bill. Since Negroes in Mississippi are systematically excluded from the electoral process those men sitting in the Mississippi legislature are there illegally and have no right to draft and pass new voting laws. And the MFDP felt that any outward show of liberalizing voting laws would in reality result in new legal methods for the state to continue its policy of disenfranchisement of the Negro. Because the Mississippi Negro has no voice in his government, he must go into the streets to be heard.

Across the wire-enclosed compound at the state fairgrounds was the Negro women's jail, twin to the building we were in. Both buildings are long cement block structures with curved roofs, looking very much like wartime quonset huts. Ordinarily they are used as exhibition halls.

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There were no white females incarcerated at the fairgrounds. As soon as they were booked, they were loaded into vans and taken to the Jackson city jail.

In our building ages ranged from 11 to 72. Many of the men were from the Delta region of the state and were members of the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union. This newly formed union of cotton choppers and pickers is striking now to break the peonage system they have been laboring under, and its members have been threatened, thrown off their land and out of their homes. An entire family came to jail. The Steptoes of Pike County, father, daughter and sons. At a mass meeting, after our release, Mr. Steptoe said: "My whole family came to jail because the MFDP is the one hope my youngsters have, not to have to live like I had to for so long, for so many years. Now I know God is with us and will give us help. But he isn't going to do anything we can do for ourselves."

In our building we were segregated, Negroes at one end and whites at the other. Between us was a form of "no man's land" belonging to the police. We attempted to break the segregation many ways. One of the methods was the singing of freedom songs. Often after a meal we would begin singing, clapping our hands, we would form facing lines of black and white, then in time to the clapping move the lines closer and closer together. Sweating and singing in their faces we would watch the police fill the space between us. Although there was the possibility they would lose control and begin beating us nobody was particularly afraid. The police were treated with measured contempt. They could beat us, but they could not control our thoughts and our attitudes. And when we increased the tempo of the clapping and began shouting: "Freedom! Freedom!" over and over and louder and louder they pushed us back into our separate ends of the building. But they were never able to break the unity of that singing or to prevent it from happening.

Once, when a number of reporters and photographers were shooting pictures and TV films of us and the building we integrated without opposition. But, when the reporters were gone, the police enforced segregation again. Any time the press was in the compound area most of our guards seemed to disappear, leaving only a few standing in the doorways. At these times their projected attitude was one of restrained good humor. After all, we were just opposing teams in a friendly game and nobody really disliked anybody on the opposite side.

However, this wasn't the attitude shown that first Monday when there were no reporters in the compound; when those arrested were forced to run a gauntlet of club-swinging, cursing, Jackson city police and Mississippi State Highway Patrol, resulting in two white males, Bill Light and Ron Weiss, both COFO workers in Mississippi, and Emily Gordon, a white female MFDP worker, being hospitalized.

This wasn't the attitude shown the day a pregnant Negro woman was clubbed in the stomach in the women's building, then refused medical attention when she complained of abdominal pains. When she was finally taken to the hospital, it was too late, and she had a miscarriage and lost her baby.

This wasn't the attitude shown the time a pre-teenager Negro boy was jabbed in the stomach while waiting at the head of a food line. Or when his companion protested and was clubbed and kicked.

Or the time I saw a Negro girl, her dress ripped down the back, dragged past our open doorway, her arms pinned by two patrolmen, while a third walked behind, punching her in the kidneys.

The police denied charges of brutality and invited the press in "to see for themselves." And brutality may have a different meaning for you and for me and for the Mississippi police system.

There were three organizations guarding us: the Jackson city police, the Mississippi State Highway Patrol and the Mississippi State Fish and Game Wardens. The highway patrol wore white tape over their badge numbers and were responsible for most of the injuries, serious and superficial, that first Monday. Fondling their billy-clubs, the handle thong wrapped tightly around their hands, their .38s on their bullet-belted hips, they and the local police loitered in the doorways, played poker, checkers and dominoes, or walked around with that particular swagger all southern lawmen seem to affect when they think they are being watched. In their freshly laundered shirts, shined shoes, smelling of after shave lotion, they presented a great contrast to us in our dirty and sometimes torn shirts and slept-in pants and overalls, our lack of uniforms. And they let us know it. Lining up

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for meals we would be told: "Back off. Don't stand near me, god
damn it. You stink too damn bad." Whites were called "white trash
Commies, idiots" and Negroes were ordered about as "boy or nigger"
One time all the Negro boys under seventeen were pulled outside
and told that the MFDP and SNCC had no money and they would
never be bailed out.

Anybody who showed leadership was separated from the other
prisoners and deposited in the Jackson city jail. The police
hoped that without leaders morale would break and we would be easy to
manage. This never happened as it was never a question of
leadership. Immediately a spokesman was removed, somebody else took
his place. Eventually the police stopped this tactic. And in
the local papers they were quoted as saying that this was
the worst group ever held for civil rights activities in Jackson.
We were not unhappy about that.

Two washrooms and one leaky drinking fountain serviced our
building. The bathrooms contained three stools, one urinal and
three sinks. The floor of the bathroom was always covered with
dirty water and most of the time there was no toilet paper or soap
and at least one of the toilets was always plugged. During the
hot daytime they smelled unbelievably bad.

Meals were our measure of time and our one chance to get
outside. They were served on metal trays and we ate, sitting at
benches along the outside wall of our building. Breakfast was
a ladle of grits, syrup, a paper cup of powdered milk and three
slices of white bread. Lunch was two vegetables or one vegetable
and rice or spaghetti, powdered milk and bread. Supper was always
the same as lunch. On Sunday we ate only twice and when the tail-
end of the food line reached the serving counter all that was left
was one ladle of creamed corn per man and the bread and milk.
Never was there any meat. And at night, before bed, we would lie on
our mattresses, sharing a cigarette when we had them, and talking
about the different meals and meats we would order when we got out.
We were always very hungry.

At meal time we would file out of the building, blinking in
the sunlight, not liking the food, but too hungry to dismiss it.
Around us were our regular guards plus additional police called in
from the traffic patrol, specifically for meals. When we had eaten
we scrubbed our trays, in garbage cans of soapy water, and rinsed
them in two other cans of boiling disinfected water. For the first
four days we dipped our trays holding them by one corner and burning
our hands. We complained to our lawyers and soon after we found our
trays equipped with long wire hooks. Jackson City patrolmen and the
Fish and Game Wardens supervised the tray cleaning, inspecting each as
we reached the end of the line of garbage cans of water. If our trays
passed inspection we were allowed to re-enter our building.

At night, about nine, mattresses were laid out on the floor
by Negro trustees from the Jackson prison. The first two nights
there were not enough mattresses. Some people slept on the floor and
the rest were, by sharing, able to fit their head and shoulders on
a section or piece of mattress. It was very cold at night and we
slept with our arms tucked under our bodies. We kept our shoes and
clothing on, but, still about 4:00 a.m. we would start awake shaking
then lie there watching the dark square of sky, waiting for it to
become light so we could get up and be warm again. On the third day
more mattresses were brought in and toward the end of the first week
we were given half a cotton blanket to sleep under. By then we all
had colds.

The lights were never extinguished and our night guards played
poker, tapped their clubs on the concrete floor, smashed them
against metal chairs and inserted the microphone of a civil defence
loud hailer into the speaker at intervals so the whole building was
filled with feedback.

Midway through the first week showers were constructed outside
one end of the building. We were then allowed a cold water shower
each night and we would wash our clothing while showering, hanging
underwear, shirts and socks on the walls over our mattresses.

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After a time in jail it is difficult to see the police as individual human beings. They react so uniformly that you forget they have families and that they are as much a product of the system that perpetuates segregation and violence as the Negroes at whom all this is directed. Also they seem to have accepted without admitting it to themselves, that the system is losing. Their violence smacks of the striking out of somebody who feels that something undefinable is being taken from him. They are striking out at those they feel are responsible for all "the trouble". By wearing a uniform and using the privilege of arms that go along with that uniform the policeman is in a position to act as many, but not all, Southerners would like to, but cannot.

To fill the long hours between morning and night we read, constructed chess sets by melting and gluing the plastic forks we ate with, played volley ball with no net and a rolled sock in place of a ball, wrote, held workshops and discussed project plans. We wanted to make it clear to the police that even in jail we could function creatively, and that their presence, although it was a nuisance, could be ignored.

But sometimes we did nothing but lie on the floor imagining how it felt to be outside. You can lose this remembrance quickly. Ten days is easily long enough. We were prepared to remain in jail but we wondered how it would feel to be out: to walk down a street, sleep in a bed, order a meal in a restaurant, see friends and wives again.

Then, on Thursday, June 24, we were released. Bail was set at \$100 a person. Dirty from living on the floor, unshaven and shaky from the food, we left the compound six at a time, at five minute intervals. It was raining. The rain came in through the hole in the ceiling, spreading over the concrete. We didn't care. We ran from the building into the rain, out the open gate of the compound and up the asphalt road to the fairgrounds' main gate.

Many would be marching the following week and expected to be arrested again. But then it was good to be out. And we ran in the rain, our arms stretched out, our faces wet, our hands touching no walls.

SDS-ERAP CONFERENCE (from the SUPA NEWSLETTER, by Ken Drushka)

More than 30 persons from SUPA projects, national staff and the Canadian Friends of the Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee attended the Students for a Democratic Society's ERAP training institute at Kewadin, Michigan, June 14-16.

ERAP, the Economic Research and Action Project, is comprised of 12 summer projects which have placed almost 300 U.S. students in poor white and Negro slums in Northern cities. The ERAP Institute, similar in many ways to SUPA's planned Fall Training Institute, attempts to bring together old ERAP staff members and introduce new staff members to the projects and the people working on them.

The original agenda provided for a national and historical overview of ERAP projects; issue workshops (analysis and strategy involved in organizing projects around specific issues such as housing, welfare or urban renewal); specialized role workshops (detailed discussion and training on such things as law, research and role-playing sessions); democracy in projects, the community and the movement; and ideology (long-range views and questions.)

This agenda was disrupted when the SDS national convention ran overtime, and the first two subject areas were eliminated from the institute. Consequently, the formal program fell apart, and the most valuable part of the two days left were the meetings of the project staffs and occasional informal discussion sessions. The Canadians present, including project members from Kingston, La Macaza and the Peace and the Professions project, were able to obtain detailed information on the tactics, principles and the problems of the various ERAP community organizing projects. In the informal sessions they were able to raise several basic questions and discover a few key differences between ERAP and SUPA approaches.

ERRATA: The date in first sentence of page one should be June 14. Page 10 Washington item on J.P. Coleman should have mentioned that MFDP is fighting confirmation of this appointment in hearings of the Senate judiciary subcommittee.

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'HERE WE WERE FACE TO FACE'

WASHINGTON--The campaign to try to persuade the United States Congress to unseat its Mississippi members continues.

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party also continues its attempt to have the clerk of the House of Representatives print more than 600 depositions collected by the MFDP and containing evidence of harassment, intimidation and collusion in preventing Mississippi Negroes from voting.

At one point, clerk Ralph R. Roberts seemed to promise to have the depositions printed and made public. But later he reneged.

Mississippi participants in a Washington lobby in support of the challenge sat in at the clerk's office to protest the failure to print the evidence. They were arrested.

Canadian Friends of SNCC are urged to write the clerk urging the depositions be printed.

The MFDP contends that the Mississippi congressmen have no right to their seats, since Negroes were systematically prevented from voting in the elections that chose the congressmen. The MFDP dramatized this fact by holding "freedom elections" of its own in three of Mississippi's five electoral districts.

Several people from each of Toronto and Ottawa participated in the MFDP Washington lobby. Here, one of the Toronto participants gives some of her impressions:

BY RUTH TAUBE

Alienation has become a way of life: alienation of the negro, alienation of the white, alienation of people in the cities and even of man to himself. In the South it found its fullest expression in fear, frenzy, and a blind consuming hatred. In the North, the dehumanization of the individual in a mechanized society has left a complacency that curdles into indifference. But the drive towards conformity, the tacit silence that can only mean consent has produced a violent upsurge among the college students in America, a burgeoning of conscience, a revulsion against a socio-economic system that encompasses the brutality of a Selma, the murder of a Viet Nam and the hypocrisy of a government that is more concerned with image and a respectable veneer than with human life and the worth of the individual. Although decadence and hypocrisy have penetrated to the very roots of the society the reaction against the deadening and narcotic apathy has been violent and repressive. But in Washington it was different. Here we were face to face with the products of the suppression and brutality perpetrated by the largest nation in the free world.

The SNCC staff was entirely Negro, but Negroes who still wore the scars of the years of chains and bondage, men whose very existence was a living testimony of the festering sore in the southern United States, of the deep slice of the knife, the blow of the billy club and the welts of the whippings. We were face to face with men like John Henry, 23 years old whose ear had been slashed at 14 years when he went to collect his wages from a white man, who had been jailed seven times and imprisoned in the penitentiary for two years for civil rights violations.

We met men to whom the white man had become a symbol, a symbol of the years of oppression of brutality of domination towards which they felt an antagonism, a hatred, a distrust. I was told that the Negro in the South needs the white man, the white civil rights worker, but he does not want him. Psychologically, emotionally, even irrationally, the white man has become a personified abstraction and hate, violent and proliferating has been bred despite a movement whose methods are nonviolent and passive. That is why the emotional, primitive, and reverberative appeal of the Black Muslims falls on the receptive ears of an oppressed people. Externally the white civil rights worker is fighting all the forces in a society which reduces, dehumanizes and categorizes a man but internally, he is faced with man's natural propensity to hatred and violence and the Negroes' resentment of the white race, even the well-meaning white man who symbolizes to him his oppressive master.

All the forces of society, convulsing against one another are in turn surging out over the vast sea of the American people seem to be clashing in Washington, a city of paradox. The white marble of the buildings, the massive structures whose walls literally scream out justice, equality and democracy owe their existence to a system that thrives on injustice and a lack of democracy.

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The cold stiff veneer of the Lincoln memorial, Washington monument, Capital building, and Justice department seem like hollow testimonials to the image of the greatest nation in the world. Under the stately, the costly, the glittering there are streets and alleys, there are Negroes living in filthy ghettos, bred on hatred, bearing the scars and wounds of the hammers and nails that have beaten them into the ground to erect the monuments and statues. Broken beer bottles, drugs, prostitution, decadence lie beneath the cocktail parties, the polite smile of the congressman's receptionist, the understanding concern of the honorable representative from California, the exasperation and tedium of the attorney-general when pressed to take action in Jackson, Miss.

In a system which classes some people as more human than others, no one cries out when Attorney-General Katzenbach refuses to intervene in Mississippi since the police who beat the demonstrators in Jackson had their badges covered and he really wouldn't know against whom to take action. Still men speak of legal complexity, political expediency or other commitments. The eye of a congressman who has rationalized his commitment to humanity is a horrible spectacle; it is cold, it is dead, it is not pulsating with the meaningful rhythms of life, with the cry of freedom that is ringing throughout the South.

I shall never forget the little old Negro man who came up with a busload of Negroes from Mississippi and when asked for his name proceeded to give us his life history, his belief in his race, his deep and instinctive belief in religion, but most of all his assurance that he was just as human as the white boy who was sitting in front of him. I shall never forget another boy who tried to rub his black skin to make himself white.

All this against the backdrop of Washington, city of ceremony, city of pomp. The city was in a fever, the astronauts were coming to address a joint session of Congress. Amid showers of ticker-tape, the people line the streets; the free world was glorying in its own achievements. The news splashed on the front pages in bold black letters. But crushed into a small column was the news that 12 Mississippi Negroes were arrested for a sit-in demonstration protesting the clerk's refusal to print evidence for the unseating of the five Mississippi congressmen and bail was set at \$6,000 for the 12. Eight hundred and fifty arrested in Jackson, thrown into jail, beaten, starved, but the press felt no reaction, relegated to the back pages, squeezed out of sight, hidden, brushed under the carpet, muted, hushed.

But could it ever be shut out of the minds of those who carried within them the knowledge that because they were black they had no place in a society whose image is so important these days. And beneath the image, beneath the veneer, lie tormented people, people in anguish, people whose voices are raised to the haunting strains of "We Shall Overcome". All this from Washington, Alabama, Mississippi, Virginia, North and South Carolina, U.S.A.

NEESTOW SEEKS FUNDS

TORONTO-Lately there has been an increasing awareness of the problems faced by Canadians of Indian ancestry. To date, the programs of the government, the churches, and the various agencies and voluntary organizations have met with very little success in finding lasting solutions.

Disturbed by these problems of fellow citizens and frustrated by the ineffectiveness of the programs tried thus far, Canadian students met in February at a conference at the University of Saskatchewan sponsored by the Canadian Union of Students. Out of this exchange evolved the Student Neestow Partnership Project. The project is not officially linked with any organization; however various campus organizations such as the Student Union for Peace Action and the Student Christian Movement -- and SNCC Canada -- are giving the project support with fund-raising, publicity and recruitment.

Because it will take considerable funds to maintain students in the field for the summer, to defray the travelling expenses to and from Saskatchewan, and to maintain an office in Toronto, Neestow is seeking financial support. Checks should be made out to the Student Neestow Partnership Project (Toronto) and sent to SNPP, 2 Bancroft Avenue, Toronto 5. Neestow student volunteers now are living with Saskatchewan Indian and Metis communities.

BRILLIANT, B.C.--Life among the Doukhobors is exciting, but one feels out of touch.

In a recent letter to Harvey Shepherd, information director for SNCC Canada, Toronto SNCCer Jim Mayor, currently involved in the Kootenay project of the Student Union for Peace Action, describes some of his experiences.

He tells of his participation in a civil disobedience project at the Bomarc-equipped air base at Comox, on Vancouver Island, as well as of his work in Vancouver and Victoria and in the Kootenay region of the B.C. interior.

Here, with some slight modifications, are some excerpts from Jim's letter:

... Things are very, very exciting here. . . . At times I feel somewhat frustrated here in the Kootenays, away from the centres of activity, especially when I hear what's happening in Mississippi, etc. The problem is that the more exciting aspects of this project will probably bear fruit later and I am concerned about what's happening now.

... We arrived at Comox air base and took part in civil disobedience action. About 65 people were there; 40 committed civil disobedience. . . . Andy Dalton from Toronto was there and will probably spend most of the summer there. A group of about nine is staying on at Comox to do community work and preparing for another demonstration July 18. This one will be rather unique for there will be seminars and speakers on the subject of non-violence at the scene of the action. . . . It is hoped by this to educate local people and to build for a larger sit-in near the end of August.

After Comox I went to Victoria (the provincial capital) to talk to government officials on the Doukhobor problem. We spent some time in Vancouver, talking to Simma Holt (author of Terror in the Name of God) and to Joe Potevinikoff, a leader of the Sons of Freedom. From Vancouver we went to Agassiz where there are a few hundred Freedomites camping near the prison. They have been there since 1963 waiting for the release of their sons and husbands etc. . . .

While at Comox I met a student who is interested in SNCC and would like to get a group going in Vancouver. He says that there is a girl in Vancouver who is also interested as she is a former SNCC staff worker. . . .

We have an office in our village in Ooteshenia (a Doukhobor community in the Kootenays); it is just like Bancroft (the Canadian SNCC-SUPA head office) with news clippings and propaganda pasted on the wall. . . . Every Tuesday we take off from work and go climbing. Morning begins at 7:30 with breakfast followed by meditations for one-half hour. So far we have only talked to people, trying to get the feel of the situation. Next week we are having an evaluation to see where we go from here. The Doukhobor community has a paper called Iskra (Spark) and I am writing articles on peace and non-violence, perhaps also Viet Nam and the Negro revolution.

Very interesting things are springing up here. Some University of B.C. students, SUPA-type radicals, are out of work. They formed a committee of labor union leaders, clergymen, business men, etc., to fight the job situation and, get this, the fee increase at UBC. They are trying to organize community support. . . . It should be worth while keeping an eye on UBC in the fall.

Our village is not far from the site of the West Kootenay Regional College which will open in the fall of '65. Listen to what its president had to say: "Mr. Campbell noted that the modern student takes his world seriously in respect to war and peace, life and death. He urged students to develop a capacity to understand the nature of conflict noting that Martin Luther King, like Gandhi and Christ, had the world the conflict of ideas without violence, that conflict can be purposeful and constructive." (Sic) At the moment we are toying with some pretty wild ideas. For example, we are thinking of approaching him with the idea of setting up some seminars and classes at this new college on the subject of peace and non-violence. . . .

In addition to the above idea, we are also thinking of conducting Freedom Schools in the Kootenays next summer. One aim of such a school would be to experiment with radical ideas of education. . . .

ROCKY GOES HOME

TRURO, N.S.--A tall, goateed Negro from Toronto arrived here recently, said hello to his parents, got in a little fishing -- and got busy working on some social change.

Burnley (Rocky) Jones, a Truro native, along with West Indian-born Denny Grant, has begun work among Nova Scotia's depressed, discouraged Negroes.

In a brief phone call from Truro to Toronto, Rocky said he has found living conditions among Nova Scotia Negroes even worse than he expected. And he has encountered a great deal of suspicion and hostility among them.

But he is fairly confident he will be able to overcome this by person-to-person contact, and he looks to the day his visit will grow into an important project.

For the time being, he has concentrated on personal contact -- knocking on doors -- and on testing some reports of discrimination.

Rocky had a pretty good idea what he'd be getting into. Years ago he himself, like many other Nova Scotia Negroes, decided there was no future for him in the black ghettos of the Maritimes, and lit out for Upper Canada.

He was working with computers as an Ontario government employee last March when hundreds of students and others, Rocky among them, sat down in front of the U.S. consulate in Toronto to protest conditions in Selma, Ala.

In the weeks that followed, Rocky decided that the SNCC approach should be taken home to the Maritimes -- and that he would do it.

Denny, too, knows of racial discrimination. He was once expelled from a Bible school on the Prairies when he refused to sign a pledge that he would not date white girls.

The two did not expect to be greeted as conquering heroes. In the Nova Scotia Negro, the Maritimer's suspicion of the outsider is mixed with the fear of the whipped man of rocking the boat.

Recently, Kingsley Brown, Nova-Scotia-born CBC-TV newsman, told Toronto Friends of SNCC how he faced showers of stones hurled by Nova Scotia Negroes while he was filming for a CBC documentary on conditions there.

White students at one Nova Scotia university responded to news of the likely arrival of a Friends of SNCC team by holding a protest meeting to demonstrate that they don't think Nova Scotia needs outside agitators.

Like Mr. Brown, Rocky can tell stories of how the communities of Negroes are dominated by a few religious and other officials who seem bent, above all, on not stirring things up.

But Rocky plans to play community organization in Nova Scotia as coolly as he played his cards in the all-night poker sessions at the Toronto apartment he shared with his wife Joan and young daughter Traci -- both of whom have accompanied him east.

His plans will pretty well depend on what he discovers and thinks as he moves into the community.

He expects that he'll probably spend the summer in Nova Scotia and then, perhaps, hand things over to some new arrival.

SNCC REMEMBERS

TORONTO--Twenty-nine Toronto Friends of SNCC recently paid tribute to three civil rights workers who were murdered in Mississippi a year ago.

The Torontonians stood silently in front of the U.S. consulate in Toronto to commemorate Mickey Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney whose bodies were found shortly after the beginning of the 1964 summer projects in Mississippi.

Those in the Toronto vigil were trying to call attention to the fact that dangers similar to those faced by the three still exist in Mississippi. The murders are considered to be responsible for much of the press and government attention which was focused on Mississippi during the summer of 1964.

This attention probably prevented more murders. The Toronto demonstrators -- like those who held memorial services at about the same time in many other U.S. centres -- believe that similar attention must continue this summer.

INVESTIGATE SLUMS

TORONTO-Several Toronto Friends of SNCC and others, acting as individuals, are participating in an investigation of housing conditions in Toronto.

Here one of the workers, Bob McCarthy, tells about it:

By BOB MCCARTHY

In mid-June, Caroline Walker, a Young New Democrat and Friends of SNCC member, initiated a slum housing project in support of Toronto Alderman June Marks.

Mrs. Marks had, in her few months in office, mounted a vigorous offensive against various well-entrenched and hidden interests.

Big apartment builders, slum landlords, and Metro government manipulate zoning bylaws for the convenience of business men and speculators, who erect high-rise apartments to be rented by the middle class. The poor and large families in the areas flattened scramble for the remaining deteriorating houses they can still afford.

Those naive or blessed with great patience entertain hopes of placement in the grossly inadequate low-cost public housing our business-dominated government sees fit to provide. But more than 7,000 disappointed families have applied for this housing, and the number is soaring despite widespread bitter pessimism.

The small handful of students assisting Mrs. Marks have tried to lay bare the extent of a few slumlords' possessions (and their wide connections). They have attempted to petition and organize segments of east-central Toronto to effectively protest cockroaches, bed bugs, fire hazards, high rents, rats, inadequate everything -- and a dehumanizing system.

Since Mrs. Marks is widely known and trusted, these students' efforts to integrate themselves with the community have been greatly facilitated.

Without ramming any ideology down anyone's throat, the students have found many conversations drift quite naturally from the disgusting conditions extant to the necessary community unity of action, and relentless demand for a radical shift of power towards the poor, the crushed, and the dispossessed.

We hope the basis has been laid for a vibrant long-term project by slum-dwelling activists, assisted by outside volunteers from the YND and SNCC.

COTTON WORKERS ORGANIZE

SHAW, Miss.-Mississippi Negro cotton workers are undergoing severe hardships but meeting with some success in their struggle to better their traditional hard lot.

The Mississippi Freedom Labor Union was organized here at a meeting of 45 people last April. By early June, it was reported that more than 1,000 workers in a number of counties in the Mississippi Delta had walked off their jobs.

The workers are seeking pay of \$1.25 an hour, as against the \$3 a day they have made traditionally. They are also seeking an end to other customs in the Mississippi cotton fields -- such as dawn-to-dark hours and child labor.

Striking cotton workers have in some cases been arrested and fined on various charges. Most suffered severe economic hardship, through losing even the pittance they would have made in the cotton fields.

Striking workers who live on plantations have been thrown off.

The MFLU was organized and is run by local people, although SNCC workers and others are helping in every way they can.

SNCC believes the union is fighting a powerful combination of opponents: planters who have conspired to keep the Negro from voting, industrialists whose machines threaten the jobs of cotton workers, bankers and loan sharks with high interest charges, textile manufacturers and merchants who keep prices down, the U.S. government which subsidizes these groups, and the American public which has allowed all this to happen.

Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party has said: "What these people (the strikers) are doing is the most important thing that has ever happened in Mississippi. It's something we've all wanted to do for a long time. These are the first people that have had the guts to do it."

SMART RACIST ON BENCH

WASHINGTON--Appointment by President Lyndon B. Johnson of J.P. Coleman, former governor of Mississippi, as a judge on the fifth federal circuit court of appeals has been denounced by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and SNCC. Coleman is lawyer for one of the Mississippi congressmen the MFDP is trying to unseat and he has a record as a clever segregationist. In his new post, Coleman could be dealing with Mississippi's attempts to evade President Johnson's voting bill.

X X X

ATLANTA-SNCC staff member Julian Bond has been elected to the Georgia state legislature. He received about 82 per cent of the vote -- 2,314 votes as against 486 for his Negro Republican opponent. This is the first time a SNCC worker has been elected to such a position.

X X X

CHICAGO-Bitter mass demonstrations and arrests in June followed the news that Chicago Mayor Richard Daley had reappointed a school official who has been hostile to the cause of school integration.

X X X

AMERICUS, Ga.-SNCC has asked for pressure to be put on Sumter County Judge James W. Smith, who sentenced Robertina Freeman and Alex Smith to respectively two and five years in reform school, although a lie-detector test had proved them innocent. The two 16-year-olds are known to be in the movement. Robertina integrated the local high school. This law has not been enforced before. The conviction is being appealed.

PLAIN TALK FROM BELAFONTE

TORONTO-Whenever Harry Belafonte notices a SNCC button in the South, he wonders whether he is seeing its wearer for the last time.

That is among the things Mr. Belafonte told Torontonians when he appeared at a fund-raising party given in his honor by SNCC June 18.

The party netted about \$550 for the work of SNCC in the South.

Mr. Belafonte told guests that it's too bad either murders or celebrities seem to be needed to interest the public in its human responsibilities.

He described his feelings a year before when national publicity was being given to the search for three civil rights workers later discovered to have been murdered in Mississippi.

When two torsos were discovered floating in a river, Mr. Belafonte said, and it was ascertained they were not those of two of the civil rights workers, liberals seemed to breathe a sigh of relief.

Mr. Belafonte had not. Those torsos had also belonged to human beings.

He told of a late-night ride through Mississippi in one of two SNCC cars, when the rear car swerved from time to time to keep pickup trucks carrying Ku Klux Klansmen from passing the cars and, probably, shooting into the car in which Mr. Belafonte was riding -- as Klansmen were much later to kill Mrs. Viola Liuzzo of Detroit.

Mr. Belafonte said he has talked to President Johnson and other U.S. administration spokesmen. The difference between their public pronouncements and their private actions is cruel and tragic, he said.

Mr. Belafonte, who has been a strong supporter of SNCC since the beginning of the organization, and who is on its advisory committee, recalled a meeting in Washington some years ago of 12 SNCC founders. Five survive.

The Telegram, a Toronto newspaper, gave considerable prominence to Mr. Belafonte's statement that the Ku Klux Klan is active in Canada, as well as Great Britain and Sweden.

Among those who helped set up the after-the-show party was Pierre Berton, Toronto journalist and television personality. Among the guests was Al Capp, creator of 'L'il Abner.

Folksinger Bram Morrison and a Toronto combo called The Wild Ones contributed their impressive talents to the evening.

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SNCC BROKE

ATLANTA-SNCC is in desperate financial straits.

The organization is thousands of dollars in debt and at last report feared it would be unable to meet its subsistence payroll.

SNCC in Atlanta has issued an urgent appeal for money.

It has also urged that organizations and groups be found to "adopt" SNCC workers in the South. That is, a northern or Canadian group -- for instance, a union local or church group -- would undertake to support a specific SNCC worker in the South.

FUND-RAISING: PROPOSALS

TORONTO-SNCC and Friends of SNCC in Canada now must embark on the most extensive fund-raising campaign in the history of the Canadian organization. A list of 14 proposed fund-raising schemes has been prepared, suitable for being undertaken either by the Canadian SNCC office, or Toronto Friends of SNCC, or both.

At the present time, it would be extremely difficult to describe the entire list. It includes soliciting the drug companies for drugs and surgical supplies, an art auction of the works of top painters and sculptors in Canada, sponsorship of a concert at the Mariposa folk festival, and a massive door-to-door canvass of Toronto homes in early September.

This massive list, or any substantial part of it, will require a great deal of work both in the SNCC office and outside. It can only succeed with the help of people in the Toronto group.

The only way fund-raising can succeed is with the assistance of Friends of SNCC.

FUND-RAISING: PRACTICE

TORONTO-The initials BSS aren't on anybody's list of to-be-remembered radical outfits. But maybe they should be.

Debbie Guild and Sherry Moës, two stalwart Toronto Friends of SNCC, are students at Toronto's Bishop Strachan School, an institution which a casual visitor would be unlikely to confuse with, say, a Mississippi Freedom School.

This pair were responsible recently for adding more than \$70 to SNCC coffers. The money was raised through a teen-age party at Toronto's Dorothy Cameron Art Gallery.

Festivities included folksinger Bram Morrison and rock-and-roll dancing. The gallery was decorated with huge murals of Beatle-mopped young men.

The BSS duo who organized the party would have liked to see a lot more people on hand. The party certainly deserved it.

But stiff upper lip, girls. Freedom is sometimes a sticky wicket.

FREEDOM IS AN ENDLESS MEETING DEPT.

TORONTO-A meeting of the Toronto Friends of SNCC group Wednesday, July 7, will be of more than routine importance.

A structure for the Toronto group is to be decided. The meeting is at 8 p.m. at the West Indies Federation Club, Brunswick and College.

FREEDOM IS AN INORDINATE EXPENSE DEPT.

SNCC CANADA, 2 BANCROFT AVENUE, TORONTO 5 ONTARIO

Here is my contribution of \$..... to help in the struggle to bring true democracy to the South.

Name
Address City Province

SNCC (Communications)
360 Nelson Southwest
Atlanta, Georgia.
30313.



JUN 10 1963