

NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SNCC CHAIRMAN MAKES SPECIAL APPEAL
FOR 68 IN PARCHMAN STATE PENITENTIARY

GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI, JULY 30 — John Lewis, chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, appealed today to the "American citizenry" to "insist" on the release of 68 Negro Mississippians imprisoned in Parchman Penitentiary only because they wanted to register to vote."

The arrests, which took place in a six-day period, occurred in Itta Bena and Greenwood, both in the Mississippi Delta.

Forty-six persons were arrested June 18 in Itta Bena after they walked to the town marshal's office to protest the smoke-bombing of their voter registration meeting. They were charged with "breach of the peace," and sentenced the next day to six months in jail and \$500 fine each. Bond was set at \$500 per woman and \$750 per man.

The other arrests took place in Greenwood on June 25 and 26 when 22 Negroes, most of them full-time and volunteer SNCC staff workers, were arrested inside the Leflore County Courthouse after Negro citizens refused to move from the closed registrar's office. All were sentenced to six months in jail on "breach of the peace" charges with bond set at \$500 per person.

All of the 68 are in Parchman Penitentiary in the maximum security wing where, according to reports, women in their '60's have been made to work and where guards have shaved off the prisoners' body hair under the guise of "disease prevention."

Lewis said in Atlanta today:

"We appeal to the American citizenry in every state in this land to insist that Federal authorities order Mississippi officials to release these citizens, innocent of every 'crime' except wanting to register to vote. The total bond for their release is \$42,000 and our resources are limited. There is only one way in which these people will be released, and one way only: when the American public cares enough to demand it."