

COUNCIL OF FEDERATED ORGANIZATIONS
NEW RELEASE
507 Mobile St.
Hattiesburg, Miss.

RIGHTS WORKER BEATEN BY POLICE IN HATTIESBURG: OFFICER THREATENS
TO KILL HIM

HATTIESBURG, MISS... December 28... A Hattiesburg policeman threatened to kill a civil rights worker here tonight after beating him in the stomach and knocking him to the ground.

Joe Schwartz, a Council of Federated Organizations worker here, was beaten after being stopped by the police while driving alone through a white neighborhood. One of the officers, according to Schwartz, hit him after accusing him of using foul language. "You better not call me that again or I'll kill you," he said to Schwartz.

The twenty-seven year old COFO worker denied calling the officer anything. He said tonight that the police had tailed him for awhile then stopped his car and asked for his license. While looking for the license Schwartz said the police began to search the inside of his car. "They found two copies of a book on the movement with a front picture showing a cop holding a Negro guy in a neck lock." Then, Schwartz said, they began to ask me who I was, where did I come from and what was I doing here.

Schwartz identified himself as a COFO worker and the officer asked him if he was one of those who believed that "niggers and white should mix together." Schwartz asked the officer what he thought. "Red birds and blue birds don't mix," the officer said according to Schwartz. "Men arn't birds. Schwartz replied, and the cop slugged him.

The rights worker is a Californian and has a Ph.d. in Physics from the Berkeley University. He has been in the state two months.

Tonights beating was one in a recent series of violence. Last week witnesses reported that the police in Palmers Crossing beat the owner of a local cafe, Mrs. Mary Jones. The Crossing is a rural adjunct of Hattiesburg, There have also been reports by families in the Crossing that their homes and the home of their neighbor Mrs. Victoria Jackson Gray were shot at last Saturday night. Mrs. Gray ran in the November Freedom Vote and is presently contesting the House seat of Representative Bill Colmer.