

Reports from the South  
by two correspondents:

## VIOLENCE IN MISSISSIPPI

By JERRY DeMUTH

"MISSISSIPPI applauds violence," Bayard Rustin told 400 civil rights volunteers, the second of two groups to be trained for the Mississippi Summer Project, at Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio. Rustin, organizer of the civil rights march on Washington last August, was only spelling out what civil rights workers have long known and what summer volunteers were discovering for themselves.

At the orientation sessions, there were repeated briefings on official and unofficial violence and intimidation. Staff personnel explained the specifics and how to deal with them. The extent and intensity of consistent violence has an effect on all civil rights workers in the South as they learn to live in the face of dangers.

Everyone at the orientation session, June 28, felt the keen edge of danger at the news that three civil rights workers were missing in Mississippi. Two of them had been trained at Oxford. One was a summer volunteer, the second an experienced worker, the third a Mississippi Negro active in the movement. When the car of the missing youths was found gutted by flames in a swamp near a seldom-traveled logging road, violence became a reality for the summer volunteers. They became a part of what has been a way of life in Mississippi—a way that is becoming more and more common.

The next night it was learned that the Citizens Council had distributed a descriptive listing of all the cars connected with civil rights activities in the Fourth Congressional District. The burned car was on that list. Violence again had been openly encouraged.

Violence has been continually used against civil rights activities, and as these activities have increased so has the violence and intimidation. This past spring the increase was the greatest it has ever been, probably be-

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cause of the announced summer project. From February to May, inclusively, there were more than 350 arrests in Mississippi, most of them for peaceably picketing. Many of the arrests came after the state passed a law

### The Author Is Beaten in Alabama

Atlanta, Ga., July 7

"I am sorry I'm a day or two late [with the article]. I went to Selma, Ala., over the weekend as a writer accompanying photographer David Prince. We were to cover integration attempts under the new civil rights bill and voter registration activities. Sunday night [July 5] after a voter registration rally, we were brutally beaten by sheriff's deputies and threatened with death. Prince was shot at by a deputy once and beaten with night sticks. Also, at three different times his camera was taken and smashed.

"I was clubbed on the head, suffering a two-inch laceration which required seven stitches to close. I have club marks on my back and a badly bruised left elbow which at first doctors thought was fractured. It is now in a sling, and I am typing with my right hand.

"We were told to leave town or be killed and drove forty-five miles to Montgomery before receiving hospital treatment. Police and deputies now claim that we told them Negroes beat us and are giving this false story to the wire services.

"A state investigator also claims that Prince told him that he was first grabbed by a Negro. But I heard a man in a brown uniform, wearing a white helmet and gas mask, and holding a rifle, say to Prince, "I'm a state investigator. Tell me the niggers started it." When Prince said, "I don't know who started it," the man jabbed him in the stomach with his rifle.

"Thus my work has been delayed."

JERRY DeMUTH

against picketing of all public buildings, streets and sidewalks, and other places belonging to the city, county and state. There also were twenty-seven traffic arrests. Almost all were on dubious or false charges, aimed only at harassing drivers and occupants. These are occurring with increasing frequency, a new tactic the state has discovered and one which would never come under the jurisdiction of a federal court.

A number of the detentions are not officially arrests. Police often hold a civil rights worker without placing a charge against him. They take him to the station where he is fingerprinted and photographed—which according to Mississippi law is only supposed to occur after one has been charged with a felony—and then release him.

Violence consistently occurred during the same four-month period. One person was killed, and there were four beatings by police (three of them in jail) and seven other beatings. Bullets were fired into two homes, while four other buildings were bombed—these four included a Negro home and three Negro business establishments: a cafe, a motel, and a barber shop owned by an NAACP president. Doors and windows were smashed in three additional buildings, including a store owned by an NAACP leader and the civil rights organizations' Jackson office.

Concurrent with the revival of the Klan in Mississippi, nearly 100-reported cross burnings occurred across the state. *The Jackson Clarion-Ledger* described these burnings as "a regular Friday night affair" because they became so common.

Six cars owned by civil rights workers were damaged—

### Mississippi, U. S. A., 1964

Mickey Schwerner, a full-time worker with CORE, James Chaney of Meridian, Miss., active in civil rights, and Andrew Goodman, a summer volunteer from Queens College, Flushing, N.Y., began an investigation on Sunday, June 21, of the burning of a Negro church near Philadelphia, Miss.

When they did not report back, as prearranged, to their Meridian office, by 4:30 p.m., their fellow workers telephoned jails in the area but obtained no information. Later, the jailer's wife at the Philadelphia jail admitted the three had been arrested on a traffic charge about 4 p.m. The Philadelphia sheriff said they were released that night and escorted out of town.

A white man who fled the state in fear said he talked to the jailer's daughter the next morning and was told the three were still in jail. Another informant said they had been beaten in the jail Sunday night.

Monday afternoon, their burned station wagon was found in a swamp near Philadelphia. That night the FBI was ordered to investigate. Four hundred sailors from the naval base at Meridian were dispatched to help state and local police officers in the search.

After two weeks, no trace of the youths was reported.

—JERRY DEMUTH

the vandalism included slashed tires and placing sugar in the gas tanks. One of these cars had been impounded by police in Hattiesburg. When the owner got it back from the police, the car had syrup in the gas tank.

A series of arrests and other acts of intimidation that occurred in Greenwood in late March are fairly representative of the barriers that officials direct against civil rights work. Since 1962, Greenwood has been the site of a voter-registration drive organized by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. SNCC intensified its activities in March to get more Negroes registered, and a Freedom Day for this purpose was organized.

### Harassment by Police Officials

On March 21, Dick Frey, director of SNCC's Greenwood project, and Anna Lee Glage, a student volunteer from Iowa State University, were picked up by police for distributing leaflets. A city ordinance, of dubious constitutionality, prohibits distributing leaflets in public places. Police released the two without charges. The same day police arrested a Greenwood Negro returning from a mass meeting, charged him with reckless driving, and fined him \$50.

Two days later, police again arrested persons for distributing leaflets. The three civil rights workers and a minister also were released without being charged.

On March 25, Freedom Day, 200 Negroes tried to register to vote, but officials permitted fewer than sixty to take the test. In the courthouse a chemical which turned to gas from the heat was placed on radiators and caused eyes to smart.

On March 26, police stopped two civil rights workers in a car and charged them with running a red light. The same day a Greenwood Negro who was active in the vote drive was fired from his job. His boss told him that the Citizens Council showed pictures of the previous night's picketing at the courthouse and he appeared five times. Another employer told the discharged employee's father that his son would never be able to get another job in Greenwood.

The next day, police detained five students from Iowa State University who were picketing at the courthouse, fingerprinted, photographed and questioned them. They were released without charge. A civil rights worker was stopped and charged with running a stop sign. A woman who had been taking people to the courthouse to register was stopped and charged with speeding. While the policeman was giving her a ticket, a white man slashed the tires of her car. Two more persons lost their jobs.

A Leflore County sharecropper and mother of nine children was evicted because she had tried to register on March 4. A man who had been picketing the county courthouse on March 25 and 26 was fired because of his activities. A Greenwood policeman had earlier asked him where he worked, then said, "Well, we'll see what we can do about that," and walked into the cafe where the man had worked.

A white civil rights worker was arrested and then released on March 30, and the next day police took another white man off the picket line and to the station. They tried to photograph and fingerprint him but

he refused, protesting that he was not under arrest. "You're under arrest as a suspicious person," Chief Lary then told him, and he was fingerprinted and photographed and released. Police also picked up fourteen other persons for picketing and charged them with disorderly conduct.

On April 2, police stopped SNCC workers Mendy Samstein and Lois Chaffee and asked them to come to the police station to be photographed and fingerprinted. When they refused, they were arrested, and then taken to the station.

One week later, police ordered forty-six persons picketing at the courthouse to leave. When they stayed, they were arrested and charged with refusing to obey a police order and with unlawful picketing.

Incidents like these continue in most Mississippi communities where there are civil rights activities. Often there is obvious cooperation between cities, so that as civil rights workers travel through the state, they can be stopped frequently.

This is what happened in early May. Six civil rights workers were taking a trailer load of books donated in the north to Rust College, a Negro college in Holly Springs. They left Greenwood around 10 p.m. on Monday, May 4. About four hours later they pulled into a gas station in Oxford for fuel; a police car rolled up behind them. The officer told them to stop and checked their identities as two more police cars appeared. Police opened the trailer, and one of them looked through the books. "They look like stolen property," he commented. He pointed out that the six had no bill of lading.

The group was taken to jail and the next morning presented with a search warrant obtained on the basis that the six were engaged in a conspiracy to overthrow the government of Mississippi. After their possessions were thoroughly searched, they were released that afternoon and they continued toward Holly Springs. Several police cars waited for them on the outskirts of Holly Springs, and they were taken before a magistrate and charged with various offenses, including reckless driving. They were fined a total of \$356.72, and removed to the local jail where they were fingerprinted, photographed, questioned and not released until 5 p.m. the next day.

One week later, one of the six, along with six other civil rights workers, was held overnight in jail at Belzoni for "suspicion of burglary." During questioning, it was apparent that Oxford and Holly Springs officials had given information to Belzoni officials, just as Oxford police earlier had passed on information to Holly Springs police.

### Steady Increase in Tension

In this atmosphere created by political and police powers of the state and helped by the White Citizens Councils, private vigilante activities flourish. As the summer project began, violent acts on the part of unidentified persons reached new heights.

Early in the morning of June 1, a bomb was thrown at the Freedom House in Canton where civil rights workers live. It bounced off the side of the building, rolled twenty feet away and exploded, shattering the

windows. Later someone called the Freedom House and asked, "How many did we get?" Neither of the two occupants was injured.

Early in the morning on June 16, the recreation hall at the Negro Catholic church in Hattiesburg was burned. It was one of several Negro churches used for mass meetings in the voter registration drive.

The next night a Negro church outside Philadelphia was burned to the ground. This church also had been used for meetings. On June 21, Mickey Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney were going from Meridian to investigate this burning when they disappeared and only their station wagon, also burned, had been found at this writing, ten days later.

### Fatal Date for Them was June 21

National Guardsmen returning to the National Guard armory in Collins on June 20, discovered the theft from the armory of forty-one M-1 rifles and 1,000 rounds of ammunition.

On June 23, the home of the Pike County NAACP president in McComb was bombed, and attempts were made to bomb the homes of two other Negroes. Also, in Moss Point the meeting hall was burned. Two nights later, the Williams Chapel Church in Ruleville and the Holy Ghost Church outside Clinton were set on fire.

Arrests, beatings and shootings aimed at civil rights workers began to occur daily. Newspaper and magazine reporters who went into the state soon discovered they were considered no different than the civil rights workers and were accorded the same treatment.

Newsmen were ordered to leave Philadelphia and at least half a dozen times whites tried to attack them but they managed to get away. Karl Fleming of *Newsweek* and Claude Sitton of *The New York Times* were chased all the way to Meridian, thirty-six miles away. They returned to Philadelphia the next day. A carload of whites also chased two carloads of magazine writers out of Ruleville.

Just as Mississippi wants no "federal interference" with its power to deny Negroes full citizenship, the state wants no publicity to center the nation's attention on what is happening. The white supremacists were supported this spring by the state legislature, which passed a series of laws to hamper civil rights activities.

As the freedom movement in Mississippi continues to grow, the state and its citizens will be tempted to take even more desperate action unless law is finally used to uphold justice. So far there are no signs of this in Mississippi.

Allen Dulles, after investigating the situation, pointed out that state authorities should be responsible for suppressing terroristic acts, but as *The New York Times* said in an editorial: "Each day's newspaper brings fresh reports of police maltreatment of other young volunteers in the voter registration drive. How much hope, then, can they put in Mr. Dulles' advice that they let the Mississippi police know where they are at all times so they can be adequately protected?"

The answer can come only from the federal government.