

Jackson, Mississippi

June 17, 1965

Here I sit with my nine cell-mates in the luxury of Jackson City jail. We white girls are being treated royally compared with the white men and the Negroes who are over at the State Fairgrounds. There they sit on concrete floors all day because the few mattresses available are removed by the policemen who surround them. We've been insisting on going back to the Fairgrounds, but of course segregation is maintained here, though it is illegal.

The spirit of the people here is really amazing, because those who have lost their fears and joined the MOVEMENT are ready to lose anything to make the lives of all men more liveable. They've treated us well, so far, mainly because they're 'scared' of our Northern contacts and of course because we are white. Even some of the old people refuse to leave the jail when the lawyers suggest that they should come out. Such is solidarity.

As you probably know from the paper, the charges against us are illegal, but the case doesn't go to Judge Cox until Saturday, and he will certainly rule against us. Then it goes to another court where it should be reversed. We'll call when we get out. I have no message from Gene, but I assume that he's at the Fairgrounds. The newsmen from CBS came and photographed us yesterday. I would be curious to know if you saw it, and what the perspective was. We agreed to be photographed only if the point were made that whites are given semi-luxury in the new jail, while Negroes are treated like cattle.

The girls I'm with are more real and know more about reality, than any people I've met in a long time. Incidentally, we have two Radcliffe graduates, a girl from Bryn Mawr, a girl from Wells(sic) in one cell. I think I'm the oldest one here. These girls don't talk the way others do, but about their projects and various approaches to work. Some of the girls live out in counties that are unmapped, with local people, many of whom came down and are now in jail. Some people think Miss. Has changed but it has only slightly. The white folk still hate and the Negroes are still scared, but each time we march, things get better - at least a little bit.

We've seen our lawyers every day and a doctor also comes to see us. They are quite careful.

The South is more terrible than I ever thought it could be - poor people do work for three dollars a day and then from dawn to dark. And work only lasts four months and then the long winter to starve. There are now almost 2,000 workers on strike demanding eight dollars a day - or \$1.25 an hour - and better working conditions. They will be successful and word is going around. The town where we were, Belzoni, which is extremely poor is talking about the strike, but they are afraid of economic intimidation and physical violence. Even the few grocery stores have empty shelves because there are no supplies, and no demand. In the poorest section of town, no sewage - cows, chickens, children run in the mud. A woman at a FDP meeting hearing about the Farm Union says "Can't we start a Maid's Union? I work for three dollars a day taking care of the white woman's children and I feel so bad when I leave my own." The white folk are hated, though the Negroes stare at us in disbelief and are amazed that we are with them. But word of the MOVEMENT is around and they welcome us. Our presence makes them less afraid, though white folk passing by almost crash their cars staring. (End of paper) You might try to write to me (or us), via FDP office, 507 ½ Farish St., Jackson. I will try to have a lawyer mail this - Love -

Your Jail-bird

We'll call when we get out - we should all be released at the same time - probably next week some time.

Dear Marky -  
Now that they are both "spring"  
and apparently enjoyably involved in  
votes etc, strategy in Ballisville, you can  
enjoy this. They are luring with a Miss somebody,  
Gene making speeches at church services, doing  
for a chest, + Wacey handing out advice  
or planned Parenthood! I had this  
dittos  
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