

# Calendar of Coercion



*"The highest law gives a thing to him who can use it." So wrote Thoreau. This little booklet is dedicated to those whose determination to use freedom is so great that they value it above their lives. It is to the everlasting shame of America that so many value it not at all.*

JAMES FARMER  
National Director, CORE



## CORE

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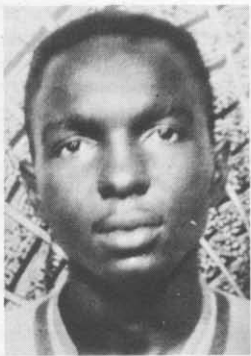
NOWHERE is the "passion for the rights of man" more clearly demonstrated in America than in the continuing struggle for civil rights. This is especially true in the deep South where no one takes up this struggle without inviting the most serious consequences. The situation of the Negro citizen in the North is bad enough. But in wide areas of the South, he is subjected to almost unchecked harrassment and violence whenever he tries to exercise the rights guaranteed to him by the Constitution, and those who associate themselves with him invite the same penalties.

We present here some paragraphs from the reports of CORE workers in the South. They were not selected as "horror" stories. They are, unfortunately, typical of what goes on day after day, week after week, month after month, even now under our new Civil Rights Law. We ask you to remember, as you read them, that this is America, the "land of the free."

*August, 1963:* In Clinton, Louisiana, the sheriff's office was busy during the day delivering subpoenas to leaders in the voter registration drive and several newly registered voters to appear at a Grand Jury session to be held that night. At night, the sheriff and Town Marshal Manchester entered the church where a mass meeting was being held and announced that they had subpoenas for several people. Manchester marched to the front of the church with his hat on, and refused to take it off. They were only able to locate Mrs. Josephine Holmes; the other task force workers had made themselves scarce . . .

*Charred remains of a church in Philadelphia, Miss. Sixteen churches were bombed or burned.*



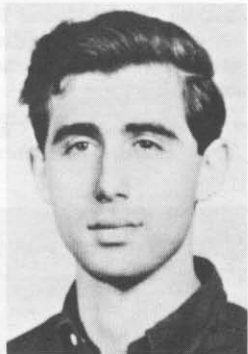


*CORE workers James Chaney and Michael Schwerner who were abducted and murdered this summer outside of Philadelphia, Miss.*

It was reported that all the windows on the north side of the church had been broken with rocks. It is rumored that the merchants are going to stop giving credit to Negroes. The newspapers have been advertising the fact that it was the supervisor of Negro schools and her husband who bonded Mike Lesser out of Jail on Wednesday. We take this as an invitation to fire her. A school board statement was read to the teachers at their workshop indirectly threatening them with loss of jobs if they even attempted to register to vote . . .

It was reported that Charles Kilbourne was threatened with losing his job. Hattie Evans reported that she had lost her job because she attended the mass rally. The FBI was notified of the windows being broken in the church but claimed that it was out of their jurisdiction to investigate it.

*September 1, 1963:* In Plaquemine, 900 silent peaceful marchers were attacked by police with tear gas, fire hoses, cop billies, and electric cattle prods injuring 28 persons. The ministers leading the march were arrested. The marchers



*Student Andrew Goodman, another murder victim in Mississippi.*

returned to the church carrying the injured. Forty mounted police came riding in front of the Church shooting tear gas and forcing the injured away from ambulances. Then the police attacked the Church breaking windows with tear gas bombs and forcing over 700 people to run out of the back doors and take cover. After tear gasing the church the police used fire hoses and pumped water into the church arresting everyone they could catch. Then they began a house-to-house search for James Farmer and other leaders. They would break into a home and, if they couldn't find a leader, would arrest all residents present. For hours, the police rode down the streets for blocks surrounding the Church searching homes, throwing tear gas, etc.; 400 people were arrested in all.

One hundred and fifty people needed hospitalization. The church was almost totally demolished.

*September, 1963:* Police have been trailing voter registration canvassing teams. They circle around the clinic when it is in operation, and yell nasty remarks from their cars, but so far no other action has been taken. This happened in White Castle, La. . . . In Port Allen, La., high school students belonging to CORE were told they would be expelled. White youths in cars have taken to trying to run down Negro kids returning from school. Also some kids have reported that these same youths have shot at them from cars.

*October, 1963:* In Ward 8 of Iberville Parish Negro plantation workers were told that they would be fired if they attended a voter registration clinic . . . In Plaquemine, a Negro student riding a bicycle was stopped by city police. They asked him what his name was to serve an injunction on him. He replied that if they wanted to serve the injunction they should know his name. The police then hit him on his forehead with a night stick.

*November, 1963:* In St. Francisville, La., applicants for registration were photographed by Judge Rarick and his wife. Also people involved in voter registration were taken before the Grand Jury and asked questions about their VR activities.

*December 30, 1963:* People involved in VR activities continued to lose their jobs. Herbert Bell, a bus driver employed by E. Feliciano Parish, was fired and charges are being pressed against him for allowing a minor (his son,

James Charles) to drive the bus. Laura Spears, a bookmobile assistant on the Negro bookmobile, was dismissed for "excessive absence."

Police continue to watch VR workers.

*January, 1964:* West Feliciana Parish, La. The parish was hit with a wave of cross burnings although not as many were burned as in East Feliciana Parish.

*February, 1964:* Gas bills in Clinton, La. were excessively high for the second month in a row. A complaint was filed with the FBI in Baton Rouge. The result of a committee protest and threats to stop using gas unless the bills were changed resulted in the lowering of several bills.

*February-March, 1964:* Tallulah, La. CORE VR workers arrived in Tallulah on Feb. 23, 1964. Shortly after their arrival the police chief, a state trooper and a cop arrived on the scene and ordered them out of town. Mike was taken to the jail that night and tried and convicted of "disturbing the peace" the next morning. The other two CORE VR workers were escorted out of town and told never to return on penalty of death.

*March, 1964:* St. Francisville, La.: The Grand Jury continued its investigation of CORE VR activities. There was no indication to any of the witnesses as to what the purpose of the investigation was.

Persons who register continue to lose their jobs (name of employer is readily available from the registration application form). These incidents have been reported to the Justice Dept. Reports come in about individuals being shot at.

*April, 1964:* St. Francisville, La.: There was another incident reported of a white man drawing a gun on a Negro man who was on his way home from work. The incident will be reported to the FBI. The man had reported it to the sheriff, but no investigation ensued. Farmers are trying to get a Chicago merchants exchange to buy their potatoes after they were refused contracts by Princeville Canning Co.

Every time a strange face enters Clinton, La. he is stopped and questioned by the town marshal.

*April, 1964:* Monroe, La.: The Sheriff's department has obtained a German police dog named "Deputy Rock" and has announced that it plans to acquire more of these dogs. The dog has been displayed in the Negro neighborhoods in a pointed effort to scare the people.

*June, 1964:* Amite, La.: The police raided the voter registration clinic with the stated purpose of having the building owner, Conway Butler, expel the white CORE workers. However, their public boasts earlier that day and their behavior indicated that their "raid" was an attempt to find out who was at the clinic and to scare others away.

*June, 1964:* Monroe, La.: Voter registration workers were arrested while canvassing in West Monroe, La. Two local CORE workers were taken to the police station but later released. At first the workers were charged with soliciting then the charge was changed to vagrancy and then to breach of the peace.

*I, Olton Scott, was walking on my way home, along Highway 61 with Lewis Washington, 18 and Phillip Gill, 19. When I was between Ronnie Kate's and the Roelt's houses, along this road, I saw a 1963 Chevrolet Impala, green and white, coming down the road going South — in the opposite direction from that in which we were going, but on the same side of the road. There were five or six white men in it. A man seated in the back on the right hand side leaned out of the window pointing a pistol in our direction. He had on a white shirt. I believe I could recognize him if I saw him again. I turned my face and pushed Philip aside. I was closest to the highway. The man in the car fired three shots before the car was abreast of us as it drove by. The car did not slacken its speed but kept going south.*

*June, 1964:* St. Helena: On the night of Tuesday, June 30, 1964 a carload of white men threatened to kill Mr. Joseph Bryant, a Negro Greensberg resident who was housing the three CORE workers there. The Sheriff was called, but did not arrive until one and a half hours later. While Sheriff Bridges talked to Mr. Bryant and the CORE workers, three carloads of whites waited outside with their bright lights beamed at the house. The time was 10:00 P.M. The Sheriff eventually promised to protect Mr. Bryant, but refused to offer same to the CORE workers, and placed them under arrest, but

released them in the custody of Mr. Bryant. The Sheriff attempted to intimidate Mr. Bryant by telling him it was dangerous to house CORE people and that he might as well forget about his job as school bus driver.

*June, 1964:* West Monroe, La.: Two CORE VR workers were stopped on a bridge and told that it was against the law in W. Monroe to associate with Negroes. Squad cars of police waited outside VR clinics to discourage potential applicants. Canvassing lists were taken from VR workers and then it is suspected that the police intimidated the people on the list. CORE cars were followed. A cross was burnt on the lawn two houses down from where Mike Lesser was staying.

*June, 1964:* St. Francisville, La.: While escorting applicants to the registrar's office, our car was stoned by a white man (later identified as T. H. Martin, Sr. a former sheriff of W. Feliciana Parish. He hit Rob Hurwitt (CORE worker) with a stick and cut his back. Hurwitt broke loose from him, got in the car and left the area as quickly as possible. As the car went down the street the man fired a shot after it. The car was then followed by three white men in a Chevrolet.

*June, 1964:* Clinton, La.: Jim Van Matre, after accompanying Negroes to the registration office, was attacked by three white men and then, when he was on the ground, three more white men joined the attack. The police were mysteriously absent. Later the police arrived and took Jim to the jail for questioning.

*June-July, 1964:* In our Monroe office we receive about 100 harrasing phone calls in an eight-hour day. We have had three bomb threats. Three workers were attacked by two whites last Saturday. On Sunday, July 4, three workers in a house in West Monroe were confronted by seven carloads of whites. The police tried to arrest the workers, finally put them out of town, and the three were chased back to the office at 100 mph.

Large crowds of whites have harrassed local Negroes attempting to integrate segregated facilities. Our people are continually followed while canvassing.

*July, 1964:* Hammond, La.: A Negro political meeting hall-church called the Faith Hope and Charity Hall was burned to the ground on July

3. The State Fire Marshal said that it was definitely arson. The FBI was notified but no suspect has been found. The same night a cross was burned at another church.

*July, 1964:* W. Monroe, La.: Three workers were trapped in a house by seven carloads of whites. At first the police refused to respond but after calls by Ronnie Moore, field secretary for Louisiana, to the W. Monroe police and to the FBI, the W. Monroe police came to the house and escorted the whites and the CORE car to the limits of W. Monroe at which point the police turned around and the CORE car was chased at 100 mph by the whites to the CORE office in Monroe.

*July, 1964:* Jonesboro, La.: Ronnie Moore and Mike Lesser were driving from Jonesboro to Monroe when three cars of whites tried to detain them on the highway. Moore was driving and was able to get away from the three cars by making a U-turn and slightly knocked against one of the other cars. There was a chase back to Jonesboro at 100-105 mph. Moore and Lesser got to where the CORE workers were staying at Jonesboro. The three cars passed back and forth in front of the house. The Chief of Police was called along with the Sheriff but they did not respond until the FBI was con-

*CORE worker in hospital after sadistic beating.*





*CORE demonstrator is given police escort.*

tacted through Marv Rich in New York. The next day in Monroe, James O. Smith filed a warrant for Moore's arrest on a charge of reckless driving and hit-and-run.

*July, 1964: Monroe, La.:* Two Negroes from Monroe were stripped and beaten in the Monroe Bernstein Park Zoo by several armed white men.

*July, 1964: Gransville, La.:* While parked on a state highway a carload of CORE VR workers were detained by a number of white men. The Sheriff finally arrived and stood by while one of the white men beat up David Howard, President of the Greensburg, La., NAACP Youth Council, while other white men held guns on David. David had on glasses and was hit directly in the eye breaking the glasses. The Deputy casually asked the whites to stop and then took David into his car and one of the whites slammed the door on David's foot. Ronnie Sigal, the driver of the car, was placed under arrest for reckless driving because her car went off the road and ran up against a barn.

*August, 1964:* In Gadsden County, Fla., last night Stuart Wechsler, task force worker of Chattahoochee, was canvassing with two local Negroes on the Smith farm. Three white men

came up to the house where Wechsler was sitting and said: "Get your Goddam ass out of here." Wechsler said, "Alright," and he got up to go to his car. Tommy Smith, one of the men, then took a heavy wooden cane out of his car and struck Wechsler across the back. Wechsler began backing away, and Smith (a county commissioner and wealthy land owner) instructed the two men with him (who also had wooden canes) to catch "the damn nigger" and kill him. Wechsler began running and fell. The three men caught up to him, stood over him and began talking about what they should do with him. They finally decided they would take him to Smith's house and "finish him off" there. They threw Wechsler in the back of their car and went to the back of Smith's house where Wechsler was left in the car with two guards. About a half hour later the deputy sheriff, Martins, arrived on the scene and said he wanted to arrest Stuart for trespassing. Smith said, "Don't do that; just go down the road and when you get back we'll be finished with him." At this point the deputy said, "Get him into my car." In the presence of the deputy Wechsler was pulled from the first car, beaten again by Smith and then thrown into the sheriff's car. He was taken to jail and booked for trespassing.

*"This republic was not established by cowards; and cowards will not preserve it."*

ELMER DAVIS

*"When even one American — who has done nothing wrong — is forced by fear to shut his mind and close his mouth, then all Americans are in peril."*

HARRY S. TRUMAN

*Churches Burned, Bombed Or  
Otherwise Destroyed In Missis-  
sippi June 15 through August 14.*

- JUNE 15: Hattiesburg: Rosary Roman Catholic Church auditorium gutted by fire.
- JUNE 15: Philadelphia: Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Bombed. Total loss.
- JUNE 21: Brandon, Rankin County: Sweet Rest Church of Christ Holiness. Molotov cocktail. Fire started. Damage not extensive.
- JUNE 25: Ruleville: Williams Chapel. Fire bombed. Damage slight. Eight plastic bags of gasoline found later outside building.
- JUNE 26: Clinton: Church of Holy Ghost. Arson. Kerosene spilled on floor. Incident occurred after local white pastor spoke to Negro Bible class.
- JULY 6: Jackson: McCraven Hill Baptist Church. Kerosene fire. Church has no ties to the civil rights movement.
- JULY 6: Raleigh: Local Methodist and Baptist Churches. Burnt to the ground.
- JULY 11: Browning: Pleasant Plan Missionary Baptist Church. Burnt to the ground. Whites sought to buy it; Negroes refused to sell.
- JULY 12: Natchez: Jerusalem Baptist and Methodist Churches burnt to the ground.
- JULY 22: Pike County: Six miles east of Magnolia, Mississippi; near South Entrance of Percy Quinn State Park, four miles from which Mt. Zion was burned June 16. Mt. Vernon Missionary Baptist Church. Leveled by fire.
- JULY 24: McComb: Rose Hill Church. Fire. Moderate damage.
- JULY 30: Meridian, Mississippi: The Mount Moriah Baptist Church. Totally destroyed by fire.
- JULY 31: Brandon: Pleasant Grove Baptist Church burned to the ground. (Located on Highway 80, approximately 3 miles from Brandon.)
- AUG. 5: Natchez (Finwick): Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church. Burned.
- AUG. 12: Brandon: St. Matthews Baptist Church. Burned to the ground.



*Searching a Mississippi river for bodies of three missing young civil rights workers. Their bodies were later discovered, savagely beaten and bullet-ridden, a black day in the Calendar of Coercion.*