

February 8, 1964

SUGGESTIONS FOR HELPING CAROLE MERRITT

THE SITUATION:

Miss Carole Merritt a Cincinnati negro has been working since November '63 as a Field Secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in Canton, Mississippi. She had been tutoring negroes and helping with a voter registration drive among the negroes of Canton.

On January 24th, 1964 she was inside the SNCC office in Canton when she was arrested and charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor. Carole was charged with getting this girl to distribute leaflets urging negroes to register to vote. Carole has said that she had not known this girl.

On February 3rd, Carole was tried. The charge had been changed to disturbing the peace and libel. According to her attorney, the disturbing the peace charge was not backed up by evidence in the trial. However she was convicted on both counts and sentenced to 6 months in jail on each, the sentences to run concurrently and fined \$1,000. Her attorney says he will appeal but that her appeal bond has been set at \$1,000 which must be a property bond.

Carole is an exceptional person. As a child she was selected as a delegate to the Children's International Village in France and as a teenager she was a junior counselor at another C.I.S.V. Village. She won a scholarship to Vassar from which she graduated cum laude in 1962. She had participated in Operations Crossroads one summer and had won in 1957 a \$1,000 college scholarship from Pogue's and Westinghouse for her essay entitled "Why I Have Faith in the Shape of the World Tomorrow".

THE REMEDY:

The best thing to do now seems to be to wire or write to any or all of the following men and urge them to help secure a full investigation of conditions in Canton by the Department of Justice. Mention that you are especially interested in Carole Merritt's case and that she was arrested because she was working on a voter registration drive. Her civil rights have thus been violated. The members of SNCC who are in touch with Canton say that there has been severe harassment of voter registration efforts and economic intimidation of negroes working on the drive.

Suggest that the Department of Justice do everything possible to obtain her release. Even though considerable news coverage has been obtained in Cincinnati for Carole, it is important to keep on working for her until she is actually released.

Hon. Robert F. Kennedy, Attorney General
Washington, D.C.
Dear Mr. Kennedy:

Hon. Burke Marshall
Asst. Atty. General Civil Rights Division
Dear Mr. Marshall:

Hon. Frank J. Lausche
Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D. C.
Dear Senator Lausche:

Hon. Stephen M. Young
Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D. C.
Dear Senator Young:

Hon. Robert Taft, Jr., Hon. Donald D. Clancy (2nd. dist.) Hon. Carl W. Rich (1st)
Address Congressmen at House of Representatives Office Bldg., Washington and begin letters
Dear Mr. Taft, etc. For further information call Marion Resor 561-8835