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June 29, 1970

Dear Friend:

Eight Negroes have been murdered by law enforcement authorities in recent weeks in the states of Georgia and Mississippi. The victims include:

-- two youngsters -- a high school student and a college student -- who fell before 140 bullets sprayed by Mississippi Highway Police at a crowd of Jackson State College students demonstrating in front of a dormitory. The high school student was shot down 100 yards away, across the street from the demonstration, as he left a bus on his way home from work. Private as well as official investigations in Jackson thus far indicate no evidence of alleged sniper fire at the police;

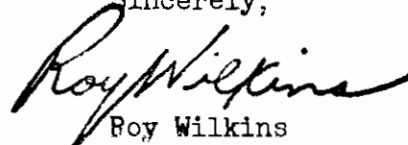
-- six men gunned down by Augusta, Georgia, police during a demonstration against local prison conditions, two nights after the murder of a 16-year-old black inmate. This death is directly attributable to the horrible jail conditions against which the Augusta NAACP had been protesting for months. ALL OF THE SIX WERE SHOT IN THE BACK, although Augusta authorities allege that the police were being dangerously menaced by the demonstration.

I have just returned from Jackson with the reluctant conclusion that a sinister racial pattern is reemerging in the South. A climate has been created which fosters separatism and segregation, and is seen by many Southern lawmen as a renewed license to shoot from the hip at any Negro challenge to the status quo, however peaceful and legal.

With particular vehemence over the past four years, we have warned that separatism and segregation lead inexorably to further division and hatred. The one right road is total commitment to one society -- integrated and equal. We of the NAACP have mobilized our total resources for intensified battle for this objective in the months ahead. Our 61-year struggle to attain this goal has known many dangerous times -- few more perilous than today's -- and we do not intend to lose it now.

Americans face manifold problems including the economy's decline, but of all the issues of national priority none is more urgent than the need for national unity rooted in racial peace with justice. Please give today -- as generously as you possibly can -- so that we can continue to lead the struggle for a truly united America.

Sincerely,

  
Roy Wilkins

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