

STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE 360 Nelson SW Atlanta, Georgia

CAMPUS MAILING #4 -- October 21, 1965

CRASH VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE IN BOLIVAR COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party held a state wide staff meeting this past week in Greenwood. At this time it was decided that the major thrust of the party would be to register voters in the counties to which federal registrars have been sent. These counties include Bolivar, Madison, Leflore, Jones, Coahoma, Jefferson Davis, Humphries, Benton and Clay.

It was decided to institute a one week crash program in each county starting with Bolivar. Bolivar was chosen to be the first county as the federal registrar has been withdrawn from that county under the condition that the county registrar would register people under the federal standards (no literacy test).

Workers will be pulled from all over the state and sent to Bolivar where a program of canvassing, political workshops and demonstrations will take place. Through this program the FDP hopes to take advantage of the provision of the 1965 Voting Rights Bill.

FRAUD IN ARKANSAS SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

This past spring Arkansas changed its voter registration laws so that any resident 21 years of age was eligible to register to vote. The first elections since this change of law took effective were held several weeks ago -- the result was widespread fraud. Enclosed is an excellent report on what occurred during these school board elections.

COUNTY POLITICAL PARTIES TO BE FORMED IN ALABAMA

In Alabama, the law says that any organization of qualified electors can nominate a candidate for the general election by holding a mass meeting. In nominating for county office the presiding officer and secretary of the mass meeting certify to the county probate judge the names and offices of the people who were nominated. The law says that the county probate judge shall put their names on the ballot for the general election. If any candidate from the organization wins 20% or more of the total votes cast in the general election the organization is automatically declared a political party for the county.

State wide candidates can be nominated for general elections by county organizations, and if any state-wide candidate gets 20% or more of the statewide vote, than the organization is declared a political party of the state.

These nominating mass meetings must be held on the first Tuesday in May of the election year. So this means that between now and next May SNCC field workers and local people will be organizing in Alabama around a new Political party in which all people can participate. Friends of SNCC in the north can help this new party most by helping to raise money for SNCC so the organizing work can continue.

CROSS BURNINGS IN MISSISSIPPI

Twelve crosses were burned the evening of October 13 in Issaquena and Sharkey counties. The first cross was burned at 9:30 p.m. in the front lawn of Mrs. Blackwell's home; she is very active in the local FDP. Other crosses that were burned include: one cross burned up on the levee right above Mayersville where everyone could see it; another one burned at the junction of Highways 14 & 1, 5 crosses in front of homes of people active in the FDP, one in front of Wollen Baptist Church where project headstart was held and they hold FDP meetings; in Sharkey two crosses were burned in front of the houses of three families that have their kids in integrated schools in Rollingfork.

A Negro boy in Mayersville said that he saw a pick up truck unloading the crosses. When the sheriff's office was called after the first cross was burned in front of Mrs. Blackwell's house, the deputy said that the sheriff could not be reached. About two hours later, the sheriff arrived at the home of Mrs. Blackwell -- he asked her if she had set fire to the crosses. He said that she knew more about what went on around there than he knew about his own farm.

The evening of October 13 three more crosses were burned in Belzoni. They all burned at the same time, around 11:50 p.m. One in front of the COFO office, one 12 miles outside of town and one near Hollandale.

The sheriff told James Bass, FDP worker, that the crosses may have been for him, but they were probably the work of some kids. The sheriff made the Negro cafes close up at about 7 p.m., before the crosses were burned.

MFLU NEEDS HELP IN FORM OF MONEY, FOOD AND CLOTHING

In Mississippi more than 850 people are on strike during this cotton-picking season. As the winter gets colder, food and fuel and shelter get scarcer for Negroes all over the South. For those on strike in the Delta this winter will be especially severe. Here is a letter from one of the MFLU members:

Dear Sir:

In the Mississippi Delta there is more cotton grown than any other part of America. There has been no minimum wage law established in regarding farm labor, especially in the Mississippi Delta in a small town named Shaw, Miss.

These people feel very strongly about doing something regarding the wages they are getting for chopping cotton \$2.50 to \$3.50 for ten hours a day. So in May, 1965, a group of people who have been working in Civil Rights movement decided that they would form a labor union. They called all the cotton choppers, truck drivers together to ask them if they would be willing to join the union and go on strike for higher wages.

The Mississippi Freedom Labor Union has approximately 886 members on strike in five cities in the state; their demands are basic; \$1.25 minimum per hour, an eight hour day with time and a half overtime, sick pay, health and accident insurance and equal employment practices in wages, hiring and working conditions.

The cities involved are: Tribbett, 438 strikers; Cleveland, 150; Shaw, 230; Sidon, 43; and Rosedale, 115. Since working in the cotton fields is the chief source of income for Negroes in these areas in the summer and fall of the year, the striking members are in need of money, food and clothing. Therefore, we will need the support of our many friends in the north who are deeply concerned with the wages problem who are confronted with what we need most which is money, but food and clothing are also needed for the strikers and their families.

Please send your contributions to the Community Relief Fund, in care of Mrs. Mary Hawkins, PO Box 176, Shaw, Mississippi.

Yours for Freedom,
Mrs Mary Hawkins