

Liz

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
360 Nelson Street SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30313
(404) 688-0331

for the week preceding
March 16, 1966

NEWS OF THE WEEK #4

Alabama

Another Tent City has gone up in Alabama, this one in Greene County, 11 miles south of Eutaw on US route 43. Five tents have been set up, and two families have moved in - Hamp and Wiley Bell and their wives and 17 kids. Stillman College students helped in putting up some of the tents.

In Greene County, there are Negroes running in the Democratic primary for sheriff, school superintendent (2) and tax assessor. A wealthy Negro cattleman who lives in a pink \$35,000 house and drives a pink Buick has just been appointed a deputy sheriff. Because of the different political philosophies (ie operating in the two-party system or acting independently), there is tension developing between those who want to work within the Democratic Party and those who are working of the idea of county freedom organizations, nicknamed Black Panther parties. Rev. Branch, the local NAACP leader who is president of the Greene County Civic Organization, and SCLC's Hosea Williams have been "black baiting" the Greene County SNCC staff. In the northern part of the county, where SNCC is strongest, a woman is thinking about running for tax assessor.

People in Hale County are beginning to get excited about a freedom organization. Until SNCC people came into the county, the meetings there were conducted and dominated by one man. Now folks are asking "what can the Democratic Party do for me? What can the freedom organization do for me?"

In Lowndes County, political workshops are being held all over the county. Bob Mants as well as members of the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO) have been conducting them. As of this moment, no people have decided to run for office. Tent City is still "holding together" and people there have applied to get a self-help housing grant from the OEO. Sheriff Ryals and some of his supporters have been holding secret meetings with some Negroes in Lowndes in an effort to get their backing.

In Dallas County (Selma), the Dallas County Voters League is running candidates in the Democratic primary, and the Black Panther organization has not yet declared their candidates. Wilson Baker is running for sheriff against Jim Clark and asking Negroes to support him. As yet, there are no Negro candidates for sheriff.

Mississippi

The old SNCC office in Greenwood was burned down recently. Burned with it were lots of clothes. MFDP in Greenwood and Leflore County are beginning to combat the local anti-poverty board which consists of 7 rich whites and 7 rich Negroes. In Bolivar and Sunflower counties, Negroes are protesting unrepresentation of poor Negroes on the Community Action Committees in the Delta by circulating petitions asking the OEO to discontinue funds until the programs as run as they should be. These action have helped to form a three county Coordinating Committee for poverty action.

If no changes are forthcoming, the Committee, according to Charles McLaurin, will send bus loads of poor Negroes to the OEO's Washington office "to stay", and their families will go to the Greenville Air Force Base. The Committee is also asking US Representative Adam Clayton Powell to conduct an investigation on poverty, education and jobs using federal money - especially in the state department of education. Mississippi has received some \$20 million and not a single Negro is employed in the state's education department.

At Alcorn College, in Lorman, Mississippi, a building, the old hospital, was burned two weekends ago. Bob Smith says it was burned by students in frustration of conditions on the campus. The Student Movement at Alcorn College (SMAC) is active. They are boycotting the Student Union building. The people in the laundry are on strike and the students can't get any clean clothes. On Tuesday, March 8th, a list of grievances was prepared by SMAC and given to the Student Council. They asked that the library remain open longer hours and on weekends, that the library have up to date material, that the male instructors stop using force (threat of failure) to have relations with coeds, that the prices be reduced, that girls be allowed to stay out longer hours at night, and that the meals in the cafeteria be improved.

60% of the students demonstrated Tuesday, March 8th, by wearing red and refusing to sing the Alma Mater in the student assembly.

Bob Smith was arrested on campus on March 9th, along with three students on suspicion of breaking the midnight curfew on male students. Two student leaders have been sent home and others have been threatened with expulsion.

Cross burnings were reported over the weekend by Jackson MFD in Holmes and Carroll counties.

Arkansas

Little Rock reports that over the past couple of weeks a tense situation may be developing in west Phillips County. One Negro activist reports a white man has offered money to get him killed. SNCC worker Howard Himmelbaum was threatened by white men in a pick-up. Young white men tried to stop a meeting in Holly Grove by shooting out the electric lines. There have been eviction threats.

Aldo in Phillips County, local citizens are challenging the composition of the local anti-poverty board. People here are beginning to realize that there is no intention of considering the demand for a reconstitution of the poverty board. If any action takes place along these lines, it will be after people have gotten themselves organized and use their power to force change. People are talking this way now. In Helena and Marvell, lawyers are giving free counsel to people on welfare to help them better understand the welfare laws and procedures.

In Gould, Lincoln County, people are setting up a child care center and are applying for OEO funds. They are aware that this is probably one of the few poverty programs to be run the way poverty programs are supposed to be run - open meetings have been held, well publicized - and the people who this is meant to serve - "the needy" - are the ones setting it up and making the decisions.

In another town in Lincoln county, Star City, SNCC workers and representatives from the Gould Citizens for Progress, the local civil rights organization, are questioning the poverty program. They attended a meeting which was called to nominate the board of directors, and discovered that the nomination meeting was to be held behind closed doors. When they tried to attend the meeting, they were told they were being represented by the school superintendent.

Georgia

Instead of having an election for Justice of the Peace in the 12th District in Baker County, where there was a good chance of a black man winning, county officials have decided there will be no election, and that from here on out, all JP's will run on a county-wide basis. Mr. Walter Singletary was the candidate. All current officeholders will continue in office until their terms expire, and no one will fill the 12th District seat until the next election. The US Department of Justice says the maneuver is legal under Georgia law. Singletary is reportedly the first Negro ever to run for public office in Baker County.

Virginia

The Virginia Students Civil Rights Committee (VSCRC), affiliated with SNCC, is planning a spring and summer voter registration campaign in a number of black belt Virginia counties.

Louisiana

In Bogaloussa, a Negro Army captain, Donald Sims, was shot in the neck on March 11th in a filling station. Sims is a close relative of Charles Sims, the leader of the Deacons for Defense and Justice. He was on his way to Vietnam. Police in Bogaloussa have arrested a white man who is out on \$10,000 bail. The Bogaloussa Voters League (affiliated with CORE) is planning action to get justice in Bogaloussa, specifically the shooting of Sims, and the fact that the man who shot deputy sheriffs O'Neill Moore and Creed Rogers last spring, killing Moore, has never been brought to trial.

Washington

Julian Bond asked the U. S. Supreme Court on March 16th for an early decision on the right of the Georgia House to refuse him a seat so candidates in upcoming elections will not "be threatened for expressing their views." He is requesting the court to hear arguments on May 2nd, in his words, "as soon as possible."