

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

360 Nelson Street, SW

Atlanta, Georgia for the week preceding April 6, 1966

688-0331

## NEWS OF THE FIELD #7

### ARKANSAS

The U.S. Civil Rights Commission will hold an open hearing on April 23rd to elevate problems in voting, education, and employment. The hearing will be held in the 1st National Bank building in Forest City.

Arkansas SNCC would like the Commission to investigate only the problem of widespread voting fraud in the state, and feels that 1/2 day devoted to this problem is not nearly enough. If there is not a satisfactory hearing on this problem, there is a possibility that Arkansas SNCC will conduct its own hearings on the subject.

The FBI is investigating incidents of violence and intimidation in West Phillips County, where SNCC staffer Howard Himmelbaum is working.

At a state-wide SNCC staff conference they took up the question of the formation of a state-wide organization. There were many questions. Should it be a "single purpose" organization, like the MIDDP, or should it be broader and take on political and economic problems? Should it work inside or outside the Democratic Party? It was decided tentatively that it would be a multi-sided organization, that it would work from the "bottom up", that the decision to join the Democratic Party would be decided later on and that ultimately Arkansas SNCC would merge with the organization and become its working staff. They are going to form a temporary executive committee, a temporary finance committee and a committee to draw up a constitution.

### ALABAMA

In the Pine Hill community of Wilcox county Julius Hamilton reports segregated tax collection procedures. "Colored" taxes will be collected on October 14th and "white" taxes on October 15. Hamilton says "this is an indication of what Wilcox County Negroes can expect from Democratic Party candidates". Although local Negro leaders are supporting candidates for sheriff and school superintendent, until this time they felt there was no need to run a candidate for the office of tax collector in the primary election. 3000 Negro voters are prepared to vote in the May 3rd primary, but many voters will stay away from the polls and will attend a mass meeting where a Freedom party will be organized similar to the Lowndes County Freedom Organization.

In Lowndes County several candidates have announced that they will run on the Freedom party ticket. They are: Mr. Favors, sheriff; Mr. Sidney Logan, Jr. sheriff; Mrs. Alice Moore, Tax assessor; Mrs. Myles, Tax Collector; Mrs.

Wagner, Tax Collector; The political party was officially formed last Saturday, the 2nd, and the candidates declared themselves then. More Negroes are expected to announce their candidacy between now and May 3rd, for the above offices and three positions on the Board of Education.

Similar activities are going on in Selma. Julian Bond is to speak at a rally there next Monday, April 11th.

#### CALIFORNIA

Schenley Industries, a big grape growing outfit, has agreed to recognize the National Farm Workers Association as the bargaining agent for grape pickers who, along with other workers in the Delano and Tulare area, have been on strike for several months. This is a major victory for the NFWA and comes at a time when they are on the last lap of a 300 mile march from Delano to Sacramento. The marchers who hope to reach Sacramento on Easter Sunday have been asking for union recognition and a minimum wage of \$1.40 an hour. This victory has significance for farm workers across the country.

#### GEORGIA

Demonstrations by students in Cordele protesting segregated and inferior schools reached a climax last Thursday, March 31st. During a demonstration in front of the Crisp County Courthouse, the American and the Georgia state flag were both lowered from the flagpole and the American flag was slightly damaged. It was the students' intention to present the Georgia flag to school superintendent Dr. James Moultrie to protest the continuing reluctance of school officials in the county to comply with federal law. (The Georgia flag is really a Confederate sign, with the state seal added to it.) The students also wanted to fly the American flag at halimas. This incident occurred in the 4th day of demonstrations, which began on Monday, March 28.

On Sunday, April 3rd, the KKK held a rally in front of the Courthouse demanding that Sheriff Posey arrest the persons responsible for the "desecration" of the U. S. flag. They said that if he couldn't maintain the law, they would. About 100 persons, many of them in Klan robes, were at the rally.

Together with the marches, there has been a boycott of the Negro schools in Cordele. This boycott is still in effect.

In a statement released concerning the situation in Cordele, SNCC said in part:

This action (the flag tearing) has touched off a large outcry against the demonstrators. Yet the reason the students are demonstrating has received little or no attention. The issue has now become the tearing of a flag. No mention is made of the fact that the Negro child who was in a segregated 1st grade in Crisp County in 1954 is graduating from a segregated 12th grade this spring. Every student demonstrator in Cordele has



heard promises from the federal government. But ever student demonstrator attends a segregated school. Their action is not surprising.

There have been 15 arrests in Cordele, including 5 SNCC workers, both from the Southwest Georgia project and from the Atlanta project. People from Atlanta went into Cordele to assist with the actions there. 13 people are in jail on \$1000 bail, but Cordele citizens are in the process of bailing them out using property bond.

Georgia Rep. O'Neal of Bainbridge, has introduced a bill in the U.S. House to make desecration of the American flag a federal crime punishable by a \$1000 fine or five years in prison. He said, "it should be an equally serious offense to desecrate the American flag as it is to alter, destroy, or mutilate a draft card..."

Baker County, near Crisp County, has become the first county in the South to lose federal funds for schools because it has refused to comply with its own desegregation plan submitted to the U.S. Office of Education last summer. 165 Negro students filed applications for transfer last fall to previously all-white schools. Only seven Negroes were transferred.

(In line with all of this, Alabama's Governor George Wallace said Wednesday, April 6th, that the state of Alabama will not comply with the most recent desegregation guidelines issued by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. "They (the guidelines) violate the historic right of school boards to handle their own affairs and violate the historic right of academic freedom.")

In Atlanta, Rep.-Elect Julian Bond has been challenged for a second time. In a hearing on April 4th in the State Capitol, the House Rules Committee set May 23rd to hear charges that Bond should be denied his seat a second time. Julian and his attorney, Howard Moore, Jr., have until May 13th to file a response. They may subpoena witnesses for the hearing on the 23rd.

#### MISSISSIPPI

MIDP candidates for the 1966 elections are as follows: U.S. Senate - Rev. Clifton R. Whitely, Holly Springs; U.S. Congress - Dock Drummond, Kosciusko, 1st district; Ralhus Hayes, Tchula; Rev. Ed King, Tougaloo; Rev. Clint Collier, Philadelphia; Lawrence Guyot, Pass Christian. These candidates have all signed the "Declaration of Independence from the Democratic Party of the State of Mississippi" which reads in part:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, even in the state of Mississippi and even before the Democratic Party of the State of Mississippi .... which stands for the principles of White Supremacy, Separation of the Races and the resulting, "Separate but unequal" life. We, the undersigned, do declare that if unsuccessful in the Primary, we will not support seg-

regationist candidates. Rather we shall run as independents in the November elections to achieve our aims.

After the MIDP candidates had filed their official notice to run for Congress in the Democratic primary in June, they sent a telegram to John Bailey, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, which noted the candidates' support of the National Party platform and principles, and their refusal to comply with section 3129 of the Mississippi Code, which prevents any chance of an "open" primary. Copies of the telegram were sent to President Johnson and Vice-President Humphrey.

In Greenwood, about 45 people, with 7 more families expected, are staying at Jack McGee's place. These people who have left Mount Beulah after declaring themselves the "Mississippi Poor Peoples Liberation Front". In about two weeks they hope to buy 200 acres of land in Holmes County, near Lexington.

In West Point, Clay County, they are preparing for "Black Easter". This is in conjunction with the selective buying campaign (boycott) being carried on to secure fair employment practices in the county. Only one white store, so far, has agreed to hire Negroes. The MIDP in Clay County is also sponsoring a rally on Easter Sunday.

In Columbus, white students at the Mississippi College for Women have offered to help in voter registration in Lowndes County, and also the work on other MIDP programs. Two girls, who showed up with a priest at Rev. Weadon's homes, are both Mississippians. They participated in a SOSC conference in Mississippi a few weeks ago.

In Amite County people have voted against the CAP board appointed by the County Supervisors. Amite County is part of a three county anti-poverty program, the other two counties being Wilson and Pike. A few whites were present, but the majority were black people. Mr. Steptoe's son was thrown out of the rest room by white officials during the meeting.

In Lorman, students at Alcorn A.&M. College began marching on Monday, April 4, protesting the many restrictions which are placed upon them by the college administration. Students, mostly male, were blocked by police as they tried to leave the campus. After a scuffle at the human barricade, the students fell back. The police followed them into their dormitories and fired tear gas to clear them out. After the tear gas firing, 500-600 students marched around the campus from 9pm to 1am. On Tuesday it was much the same, with a confrontation between students around 2000, and state troopers. Gov. Johnson had ordered an infantry company of National Guardsmen from Natchez to Lorman, so they augmented the local and state police on the scene. After the authorities broke up the demonstration, using clubs and tear gas, the situation calmed down somewhat. Bob Smith reports



the students are considering three things: sending a delegation to the S.S.O.C conference being held in Atlanta this weekend; about 150 students will travel to Mount Beulah for a weekend conference of their own; and two carloads of students will travel to Washington next week to seek help from the federal government. Students have complained to the Alcorn President J. D. Boyd that laundry and cafeteria employees are not paid enough and that he imposes too strict a curfew on coeds and, that he arbitrarily sends students home for minor infractions. In April 1964, about a thousand Alcorn students were expelled at Bayonet point because of their participation in civil rights activities. Later in the summer bodies of two Alcorn demonstrators, Charles Moore and Henry Dee were found in the Mississippi River. On Thursday it was reported that students and administration are both ready to sit down and talk.

The Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee (LCDC) in Jackson is about to file a suit against Sheriff Rainey of Neshoba County, and two Negro policemen, Willie Windham and Curtis Tingle. All three have been involved in brutality against a Philadelphia Negro, Andrew Read. Read was taken in for questioning recently in connection with another Negro who was wanted by Rainey. Read said he didn't know the whereabouts of the man. Rainey then told the two Negro policemen to "persuade Read to remember". He was then beaten and finally released. During the last two months there have been many complaints against Windham and Tingle, that they have beaten Negroes. A demonstration to pressure the city to remove the two policemen is planned for Saturday, April 9.

#### WASHINGTON, D.C.

There is another tent city. It is set up in Lafayette Park, right across Pennsylvania Avenue, directly in front of the White House. President Johnson can gaze at those tents any time he want to and he must look at them even if he doesn't want to. Ninety Mississippi Negro farmers have set up four tents in a row in the park. They say they will stay there until the OEO give them a grant to build homes in Mississippi. Many of the people in the tents are members of the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union which went on strike in the Delta last summer, and who have been living in tents ever since. OEO says there's a lot of red tape. The people say they can wait as well in the park as in Tribbet or Leland.

#### OTHER

The Southern Students Organizing Committee (SSOC) is presently conducting a tour of southern folk singers. Here is a schedule of the tour:

Apr. 11	Selma	Apr. 14	Jackson	Apr. 18, 19	Austin
Apr. 12	Birmingham	Apr. 15	Tuskegee	Apr. 21	Lafayetteville
Apr. 13	Tribbett	Apr. 16	New Orleans	Apr. 22	Nashville

William Porter says that the NCC staff meeting in May will be held at Gammon in Atlanta, instead of Waveland, Mississippi. They are repairing Waveland. The dates are the same: May 9th through May 15th.

Also a Southern Students Conference is being held April 29th through May 1st at Gammon.

### SEE YOU AT THE MEETING...

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pt. 13	Tupelo	pt. 16	New Orleans	pt. 22	Memphis