

the voice

360 Nelson Street, S. W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30313

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The Student Voice, Inc.

August 30, 1965

COOP FORMED IN MADISON COUNTY, MISS.



Women work in Building they were able to rent with contributions received from supporters. Sewing machines have been donated. The Coop is now working on 6,000 children's smocks for the Child Development Group of Mississippi.

JACKSON, Miss. -- The Madison County Sewing Coop is located in a large, former exhibition hall on highway 22, a mile west of Canton. Twenty-six women and one man are employed there. Each is a member of this coop. They work eight hours a day, paying themselves for the first four hours, and donating the final four. They work at 16 sewing machines, a long cutting table and one pressing board.

The principle of the coop is one member - one vote. No matter how much an individual invests he is allowed only one vote. Everybody benefits according to their participation.

Mrs. Levy, vice-president of the coop talked about its formation. "Well, last fall, three of us, Mrs. Harris, Maggie Douglas, our president and me talked about what we'd like to do. What we decided was a sewing coop. So we began going around to see if we could get people to a meeting to

talk about this. At first it was hard to get people out. Miss Douglas and Mrs. Harris did most of the going around because I had a job at the time. When we got the ladies together at two or three meetings they said they would like a sewing coop, but not many of them thought we could do it. So we got people to bring in things they could make. Things like shirts and aprons. One lady brought in two hats. Then we went around asking people to donate money. Some gave as little as a dollar. Most people gave two-fifty. We made four shirts and sent them to New York. We didn't get any money from these but we got some sewing machines. Then we made ten shirts and sent them to New York and we got a donation of \$15,000. We used that money to move out here to this big building and to repair it. We had to put in plumbing and lights to work by. Then we got the contract from the Child Development Group of Mississippi for 6000 little

children's smocks. That's what we're working on right now. We got more people interested after that. Lots of people who didn't think we were going to do anything at first. We got a long waiting list of people who want to work in here now. But the girls we got in first are those from out of the kitchens: maids and such. Then there are those who lost their jobs because they were active in the Madison county movement. Some were fired for trying to vote. Some for attending meetings. Next are those who really needed the job, who didn't have any money. Those who have children and were making a dollar and a half a day, on the days when they get work. Lots of people with lots of kids get only that. And that's not enough to live on.

When we started the coop we went and saw the mayor of Canton and told him what we were doing and he said he thought it was a good idea. Then we went and told the sherrif. He told us we didn't need a license or anything as long as we weren't selling the clothes from here. The local white people, they don't bother us. Most of them don't even know what going on here and we haven't had any trouble. The only thing we really worry about is maybe a bomb being thrown in here and our machines being broken up.

What we'd like to see is maybe some day each of the girls in here going around the state teaching sewing and helping to get coops started.

We hope what we're doing is going to work out. We worked awful hard getting it going. And so many people didn't believe we would be able to do anything. We are going to keep on working hard. We want people to see that Negroes aren't lazy like so many say. They say we won't do anything, but what can you do when there's no jobs? People want to work. And this is the best way. When you're working with each other for each other."

POOR PEOPLES CORPORATION UNDERWAY

The Poor Peoples Corporation has announced that its first membership will be held August 29th, 1965 in Jackson, Mississippi. At this meeting, groups of low income people will request funds from the Poor Peoples Corporation for the purpose of enabling them to embark on some type of self-help enterprise.

The Poor Peoples Corporation is a deprived organization that has been formed for the purpose of enabling people to receive the financial and technical assistance that they need in order to initiate self-help groups (cooperatives, improvement associations, etc.) that are designed to off set some of the effects of poverty.

The Corporation was formed when it was discovered by civil rights workers, who had organized low-income people into thinking about forming cooperatives and credit unions, that it was impossible to move forward because of the cumbersome

amount of beaucratic "red-tape". All of which has to be overcome in order to get such groups financed from existing sources, and the fact is the groups appear too "risky" to be financed through existing programs or by existing sources.

The Corporation is a non-profit one, it does not issue shares, but issues membership cards. Low income people are eligible for membership and it costs them 25¢ per year. The Corporation has a staff which raises money between membership meetings to create the revolving loan fund. Membership meetings are held every three months. At the membership meetings, the membership (all those who have paid 25¢ for the year) are told how much is in the revolving fund (that is, how much the staff has raised from contributors). Then the membership hears requests for loans from spokesmen for groups that have been formed for self-help purposes. After the

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Some talk about Some of the Things That Need to be Done In East Selma
Some talk about How to get These Things Done

COME and BRING YOUR NEIGHBORS to The East Selma People's Convention

at CLAUDIA MAE STRONG'S BACKYARD
220 HALL ST. (NEAR MAXEY)

EAST SELMA, ALABAMA - Residents of Selma's all Negro East side gathered together in mid-July to discuss improving city services in their neighborhood.

Meetings like this one are planned for other Alabama communities, and hopefully will begin building a base of interest in community affairs.

DEMONSTRATIONS - Ft. Deposit, Ala.

By Jean Wiley

We felt that the planned demonstration should be cancelled. The young people, most of them under 19 years old, were very disorganized, despite the help given them by Jimmy Rogers, Tuskegee Institute student and SNCC volunteers in Lowndes County. Perhaps the most disturbing, though understandable, problem was that the local kids at first absolutely refused to remain non-violent if attacked by white mobs. We were troubled, each of us visualizing violently spilled blood; but we could find no solution beyond quietly explaining the practicality of the non-violent approach.

We faced other problems. There were so many white businessmen who had by various means intimidated and mistreated Negro customers that the prospective demonstrators, their numbers limited to thirty-seven, could not readily decide which establishments should be picketed. Finally deciding upon three, the group entered a discussion of tactics, having promised to be non-violent.

At approximately 11:45 the group rose from the damp ground on which we'd been sitting for almost 2 1/2 hours and picked up the signs, ready to begin the demonstration. Having unanimously decided to picket the stores of the three businessmen who had most recently mistreated

Negro customers, the demonstrators separated into three small groups.

Herb's City Cafe deserved to be picketed, according to the demonstrators, because the manager has repeatedly refused to obey the Public Accommodations section of the 1964 Civil Rights Bill; he continues to serve Negroes in the back and whites in the front. The second store decided upon was Waters' Dry Goods, where "Mr. Waters gives credit to Negroes, then threatens them with physical violence if they can't pay him on time." One student reported that on Sunday, August 8, Waters struck a Negro man, Pat Rudolph. Mc Grough's Grocery was decided upon for much the same reason as was Waters'.

Ten minutes before the cars started for town, an unidentified Justice Department official made his third and last visit. Having been ignored when he twice warned the student of probable physical harm if they carried out this demonstration, he returned to inform Jimmy Rogers that to avoid violence the city policemen would arrest all demonstrators on the spot. Even so, the threat of violence was a very real danger, so real that those of us who were there as reporters attempted to discourage the demonstrators. The most remarkable thing we noticed was that even in the

presence of possible death, the young people were determined to carry out their plans. We soon discovered that this determination was the result of neither childish naivety nor indifference; the students, who, as Negroes, face this threat daily, were well aware of the chances they were about to take. Their determination was, to us, remarkable.

"The Voting Rights Act means next to nothing to these kids, most of whom will not be able to vote for several years, but all of whom have experienced the deadening sting of segregation and all its harmful effects. They, too, want to be recognized as human beings. If this means protesting injustice which has directly involve them despite possible harm, then we must not stop them." As he uttered the statement which explain in a nutshell the complexity surrounding demonstrations in which young people participate all over the South, Stokely Carmichael, SNCC project director in Lowndes County, rose slowly, even hesitantly, to join one of the three groups already formed. We left for Fort Deposit minutes afterward.

As the Justice Department agent had warned, angry white mobs awaited the demonstrators, mobs armed to the man with long walking canes thick enough to crack a human skull with one stroke. As we searched for a parking place, we saw three groups, each having about twenty men, approach from various angles the area in which the demon-

The Voting Bill - HOW DOES IT WORK

By Barbara Brandt

The federal voting rights bill has been in effect for just about two weeks. During this short length of time, many examples have come to light which point up both ways in which segregationists can evade the act, as well as the inadequacy of the act itself.

The methods by which the bill is evaded range from the glaringly obvious to the deviously subtle. Some registrars are still employing literacy tests in one form or another. In Albany, Georgia, the city registrar says she will continue to test applicants until she has "specific orders" to stop. In many counties in Mississippi, SNCC workers have reported that Negroes who can't read are turned away. The registrar of Sunflower County is reported to have told prospective applicants, "You can't read or write good enough to register, so come back next week."

Frequently, the recently instituted 6-question form, which ask for the applicant's name, residence, and other legitimate information, is itself used as a literacy test. Workers in DeSoto and Washington Counties, Miss., report that applicants are made to fill out the form themselves, without assistance, in direct contradiction to the requirements of the voting rights act. Those who are unable to do so are turned away.

A different kind of evasion occurred in Baker County, Georgia, where the local sheriff has a reputation matching that of Sheriff Rainey in Mississippi. There, prospective applicants never even go inside the courthouse. Sheriff L. Warren Johnson ordered everyone except the applicant themselves out of the building. When Charles Sherrod, one of the SNCC

workers who had accompanied the applicants, tried to explain that some of the people would need assistance in filling out the form, Johnson knocked him down the courthouse steps to the sidewalk below. The people left in fear before anyone got to the registrar's office.

In several counties which come under the jurisdiction of the voting rights bill, there had already been a federal court order which instituted a registration test simpler than the one being employed by local officials, or which ordered the local officials to administer the previously existing literacy test fairly to all prospective applicants. According to representatives of the Justice Department, these injunctions take precedence over the voting rights act. In both Marshall and Forrest Counties in Miss., a 17-question test is still being used and will be used until the federal injunctions which instituted them run out.

One obvious inadequacy of the bill is that it says nothing about the length of time the registrar's office is to be open. In Sumter County, where the literacy test is used to take up time, prospective applicants are faced with the further problem that the office is open only the first and third Monday of each month.

Another well known inadequacy of the voting rights bill is that it does not abolish the poll tax. The bill's provisions concerning the poll tax are interpreted by the Justice Department to mean simply that in areas where local regulations require voters to pay such a tax, applicants can not be disqualified if they have paid it. As a result, in Mississippi, people who are registered by federal examiners cannot vote until they have waited 45 days and paid one year's poll tax. Those registered by local officials have to wait 4 months and pay two years poll tax until they can vote. This means that no one registered under the voting rights bill was able to vote in the August 17th referendum that would determine whether or not an amendment would be added to the Mississippi constitution abolishing the literacy test and otherwise bringing state voting requirements up to standards established by federal ruling.

MFD P CHALLENGE - Progress Report

After 2 1/2 months of delay the Challenge brought by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party is in the hands of the Subcommittee on Elections and Privileges of the House Administration Committee. According to the statutes under which the Challenge was brought, the opposition, the white Mississippians, have thirty days in which to file a brief which will answer the brief officially filed by the MFD P on July 29. This means that the Mississippian's briefs don't have to be filed until August 29th.

Actually, MFD P briefs were filed with the clerk of the House on June 30, but the Clerk did not officially accept the brief at that time. He waited until the depositions which he had, after a long and unnecessary delay, ordered to be printed were ready

to be taken to the Subcommittee. Then, on July 29th, he delivered both the brief and the depositions officially to the Subcommittee.

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party has done all it can, according to the law," Party Chairman Lawrence Guyot declared recently, "and now it is the DUTY of Congress to vote on the Challenge in this session." Because the Subcommittee is dominated by southerners who will obviously try to delay the vote on the challenge until the next session of congress intensive pressure by lobbyists must be put on congressmen to see to it that the Challenge comes before the house in this session. To wait until the next session would make the challenge practically meaningless, because congressmen are

elected for a two year term and the terms of the challenged congressmen would be almost over.

Intensive study and research, has been done by MFD P lawyers on parliamentary means of getting the challenge to the Floor of the House and bringing it to a vote without waiting for the Subcommittee to act. According to the law, a member of Congress can introduce a resolution of "highest privilege" on the contested elections, and it must be recognized by the speaker and will take precedence over all other business of the House. The resolution asks that the Subcommittee be discharged of its responsibility of hearing the cases of the contested elections and that the challenge be brought directly to the floor. Con-

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Demonstrations

strators were forming picket lines. Suddenly, five policemen rushed to the demonstrators, arrested, and swiftly directed them into a pick-up truck. As the loaded truck sped down the street, we could hear the youngsters singing "we Shall Overcome" loudly and confidently amid the jeers of white onlookers. They were all taken to the Hayneville County Jail, where they were charged with "parading without a permit, and disturbing the peace."

Should Civil Rights Workers Take A Stand On Vietnam?

By Howard Zinn

The question has burst out suddenly in The Movement, with varying responses. The NAACP, through Roy Wilkins, says "Let's not take a stand." The Urban League says very much the same. CORE obviously has a strong rank-and-file sentiment for opposing American policy in Vietnam, but James Farmer pressured them into silence at their recent convention. The SCLC, at its annual meeting, showed great concern, with James Bevel speaking of using non-violence to somehow stop the war. FDP workers in McComb came out with a hot anti-war leaflet, and SNCC people participated in several Washington demonstrations against American policy.

Clearly, people in the movement are torn and troubled, and I would like to initiate a discussion in SNCC on this question.

Let me start by reversing the situation. Suppose one of the peace organizations is approached by a member of the Freedom Democratic Party and asked to take a stand on behalf of the Challenge. And suppose the organization says: "Well, we are really with you, but we don't want to commit ourselves openly because our primary concern is peace, not civil rights. We think it may hurt our work for peace

if we get tangled up in issues like the Challenge." I think Movement people would be indignant, and rightly so. They would ask: "Isn't ALL human suffering our concern? Aren't war and discrimination twin evils of modern society? What if all people of conscience separated into many different organizations working for different causes, and insisted on sticking only to their own cause, not giving aid to the others?"

The point is not that a civil rights group should stop what it is doing on racial equality and turn to the issue of world peace. But why can't it continue its main work, and at the same time support to whatever extent it can, people in other parts of the world who are poor and oppressed? I am talking not only about Vietnam, but about the Dominican Republic, South Africa, or anywhere else where there is a burning issue of injustice. Vietnam right now is the critical spot in the world, just as Mississippi was the critical spot in the United States in the 1964 summer.

Movement people are perhaps in the best position to understand just how immoral are this nation's actions in Vietnam. One reason, as Bob Parris said recently in Washington, is not that civil rights workers understand so much about foreign policy, but

that they understand so much about the United States. They understand just how much hypocrisy is wrapped up in our claim to stand for "the free world". They know how much they had to endure in beatings and bombings and murder before the American government acted to pass civil rights legislation that was a century overdue (and which is still only the first small step towards real equality). And so, to put it bluntly, Movement people don't have that much faith in what the government says.

Events in Vietnam become easier to understand in the light of recent experience in the South. For instance: the cry of "outside agitator" is raised in BOTH places. Just as the white South finds it hard to believe that Southern Negroes are genuinely dissatisfied, and so attributes the Negro revolt to "outsiders", the U.S. finds it hard to believe that the Vietnamese peasant really is in revolt against the old way of life, and so blames the rebellion on "outsiders" from the Communist nations.

Now it is true that "outsiders" support the Southern Negro, and even come South to help out. And it is true that North Vietnamese

have come South to help the Vietcong rebels. But these facts don't alter the fundamental issue: that in both cases there is a home-made uprising against an oppressive system. President Johnson again and again muddies this basic fact with talk about "aggression" when all the people fighting against the U.S. are in their own country and American soldiers are ten thousand miles away from home.

There is another interesting analogy between the plight of the Southern Negro and the crisis in Vietnam. In both situations there is the use of special words that arouse hatred and distort reality. In the South the word is "nigger". It destroys the individual human being of tan or brown or black color, who is a man or a woman, a farmer or a teacher, who is a SINGLE person, unlike any other person in the world. The word "nigger" is designed to abolish that individuality, to put millions of people into one inhuman category which makes them an object of hatred and murder.

In American foreign policy, the word is "Communist". The word is a blanket which smothers the true complexity of the world and the individuality of human beings. A

"Communist" in Russia is not quite the same as a Communist in Yugoslavia or in China or in Italy. Stalin was a Communist, who used terrorism against his critics, but his critics were Communists today, and there are Communists today who oppose such terrorism. And inside each "Communist" country there are wide variations of belief. Yet, Americans marines shoot Vietnamese women and children, our planes destroy the homes of farmers and their supplies of food. All of this is justified by the use of the word "Communist" while the facts indicate that the average Vietcong fighter is an ordinary peasant tired of being ruled in the old way.

And so, young people in the Movement can see through the Vietnamese situation with a quick clarity that middle-class intellectuals often do not have. That is why a number of SNCC people have been taken part in demonstrations against American policy in Vietnam. SNCC always prided itself on a special honesty, on not playing it "safe", in saying exactly what it felt like saying. Shouldn't it now say, at this crucial moment, that FREEDOM NOW must be international?

Progress Report

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gressional friends of the MFDP have committed themselves to introducing such a resolution if the Subcommittee does not act with all due speed.

Many groups have come to Capitol Hill to lobby in support of the challenge. On August 16th, a group of 60 lawyers, representing many states began an intensive lobby for the challenge. They were recruited by the American Civil Liberties Union and led by ACLU head, John Pemberton. The group lobbied 250 Congressmen over a period of 3 days. Jack Pratt, representing the National Council of Churches, Carl Rachlin of the Congress of Racial Equality, and Arthur Kinoy and William Kunstler also joined in the lawyers lobby.

The most important group of people who will come to Washington to

lobby will be over 1,000 Mississippians who plan to come the middle of September. FDP workers in Mississippi estimate this number represents about 1/5th of the number of people who would like to come. Money is being raised in the north and in Mississippi to finance the trip. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee has committed its full resources in Mississippi to make this trip possible for the people who are bringing the challenge. During the first week in September, the Mississippians will maintain a vigil outside the Capitol similar to the vigil that was held on January 4th at the beginning of the challenge. The people from Mississippi have called on their friends and supporters in the north to join them in lobbying activities during this vigil. The demonstration is expected to last until Congress votes on the Challenge.



A U.S. MARINE using a cigarette lighter to burn a home in Camne. Marines asserted burning of village was justified by evidence of Communist control. American troops shoot Vietnamese women and children, our planes destroy the homes of farmers and their supplies of food.

Poor Peoples

POEM

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membership has heard all the requests, the entire membership decides which groups are to be funded and how much each is to get.

During the interim between membership meetings, no money is given out. Contributions are held in the bank until the next membership meeting. The groups that are financed are expected to repay the money which they received in order that it might be used by other groups.

Self-help groups can also get technical assistance from the Poor Peoples Corporation at any time by simply asking for it. Technical assistance is offered to train groups how to do certain things, let groups know what ideas are technically as well as economically feasible, assist groups in drawing up their proposals for presentation at a Poor Peoples Corporation Membership meeting and assisting organizing groups along cooperative principles.

The Poor Peoples Corporation needs assistance from interested people:

- (1) ideas or examples of self-help endeavors
- (2) persons to work with low-income self-help groups
- (3) funds to be added to the revolving fund, for loaning purposes
- (4) people who have a knowledge of marketing and distribution
- (5) people who have handicraft and similar type skills

If you can offer assistance in any of these areas please contact:

POOR PEOPLES CORP.
P.O. BOX 977
JACKSON, MISS.
TEL. (601) 948-5960

Finally, if you know of low income people who might be interested in receiving information on how they might be able to organize with others and receive assistance from the Poor Peoples Corporation, please have them contact the above address.

The second meeting of the Poor Peoples Corporation will be held in Nov. The place will be determined at the first meeting.

IV

Someone sat and told me something new

I'm taking off out there a mile or more is

meadows where the soft green summer children go

I'd like a lot to look at them

a little while, Remember being small of curled hair

and loved and let alone

to use my fingertips

even on the grownups pretty hands

That certainly was a long time ago

I understand your crucifix come on

we'll walk a way we know already how to

climb a hill and here's the simple plan:

I lift up the wire while you go under

you lift the wire for me

jane stembridge

Stamps For Transportation

For several years SNCC has been convinced that trading stamp drives could be a very important part of our fund raising program. About nine months ago, A Friends of SNCC group in Marin County, California began in earnest to collect Blue Chip stamps. The result? Two Ford Falcon station wagon buses which will be used for voter registration work in the rural south.

Because the drive was so successful and because so many people from all over the nation responded to the request for stamps, Marin Friends of SNCC has begun an intensified drive to collect S&H Green Stamps to purchase additional cars and buses.

Stamps have come from all over the country. Says one member of the group, "I only wish I could communicate how gratifying it is for all of us to open

the stamp mail and realize the reservoir of sympathy and good will that exist toward the work SNCC is doing."

Transportation costs are one of the largest budget items that SNCC has and cars and buses are desperately needed by field staff working in the black belt South. If you have stamps that you can send (any kind) or think you could help this drive in your community, write:

Marin Friends of SNCC
P.O. Box 210
Mill Valley, California

Statement by John Lewis On Los Angeles & Chicago

In Los Angeles and Chicago, black people are protesting against police brutality, economic and social discrimination, and the failure and refusal of men with power to meet the needs of an oppressed people. The conditions these people have lived in breed frustration, bitterness, and a sense of despair. The Negro people throughout this country are tired of being treated like things, instead of being respected as human beings. The use of police and military power to try to solve the problems that Negroes are confronted with in the ghettos and slums of our cities is an unspeakable mistake. It will only aggravate the disease of poverty and despair. The only way to end this kind of protest is for local, state, and federal governments to bring about a true democracy in which all Americans, regardless of class and color, will have an equal stake and share in the economic and political life of this country.

360 Nelson Street, S. W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30313

WILL YOU HELP?



If a lot of people gave a little and a few people gave a lot, we could get a car for every county where we work.

Organizing in a rural county means needing a automobile, that runs and an office, with a telephone, and a mimeograph machine and a typewriter, and paper to feed into them, and envelopes to mail things, and stamps, and gasoline to get to mass meetings, or to get to the site where a church has just been burned, or to

reach people who are afraid to come to us, and to take people to courthouses to register for voting.

Freedom schools need supplies, and lights and heat ... Community centers need all kinds of equipment for work and play ... And all of our workers, and all of the volunteers who have come to help, need places to stay, and something to eat and a way to move about so that more people can be reached.

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

360 Nelson St., S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia

I would like to help SNCC's work in the South. Enclosed is \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Contributions of \$3.00 or more go towards a year's subscription of the Voice.

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