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STATEMENT ISSUED FROM THE GREENVILLE AIR FORCE BASE

WHY WE ARE HERE AT THE GREENVILLE AIR FORCE BASE

We are here because we are hungry and cold and have no jobs or land. We don't want charity. We are willing to work for ourselves if given a chance.

We are at the Greenville Air Force Base because it is federal property and there are hundreds of empty houses and buildings. We need those houses and the land. We could be trained for jobs in the buildings.

WHAT ARE WE DEMANDING?

1. WE DEMAND FOOD. We are here because we are hungry. Our children can't be taught in school because they are hungry. They can't even get the food in school because they have to buy it and don't have the money.

2. WE DEMAND JOBS. We are here because we have no jobs. Many of us have been thrown off the plantations where we worked for nothing all our lives. We don't want charity. We demand our rights to jobs, so that we can do something with our lives and build us a future.

3. WE DEMAND JOB TRAINING. We demand that people be trained for things that they want to do and that they be paid while they are being trained.

4. WE DEMAND INCOME. We demand that poor people be given an income instead of handouts and food commodities. Until we get an income for our families, we want commodities that are fit to eat. We want fresh vegetables, fruits, and meat. The federal government tells us to go directly to the state and county for help, but when we go there, they don't know what we're talking about.

5. WE DEMAND LAND. We are here because we don't have land. There are thousands of acres here that the government owns. We say we are supposed to be part of that government. We want the clear and the unclear land, and we'll clear the unclear land ourselves.

6. WE WANT "OPERATION HELP" TO BE STOPPED. We don't want the Mississippi county boards of supervisors to have another chance to decide whether the poor people should get food. We don't recognize these county boards because they don't represent us. We want the Office of Economic Opportunity and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to hire poor people we say represent us. We, the poor people, want to distribute the food.

7. WE DEMAND THAT PROJECT HEADSTART SCHOOLS BE STARTED NOW. We demand that the Office of Economic Opportunity give us the money they promised us last September so that our children can be taught in the Headstart schools.

We are ready now to ask of President Johnson whose side are you on -- the poor people's or the millionaires'?

POOR PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE  
Greenville, Mississippi  
January 31, 1966