

1000 FAIRBANK STREET

JACKSON, MISS.

352-9312

352-9128

COUNTY REPORTS—January 20, 1966-February 5, 1966

FIRST DISTRICT--ATTALA CO. (Kosciusko)--On Jan. 29, there was a mass meeting attended by 500 people. Lawrence Guyot was guest speaker. After the meeting, people went to restaurants all over town, where they were served. Three nights later, 14 people, including worker Gunter Frenz, went to the movie theater. White people threw ice and eggs at them while police stood by. When they left, they were followed by a dozen carloads of whites. Later that night, 13 guys with guns and clubs came to the office. Gunter fired over their heads, and they left amid threats. On Feb. 2, around 10:30 p.m. one of a group of voter registration volunteers from Oberlin College was shot in the shoulder while standing in front of the FDP office. Just before the shooting, a house near to the Office was burned down. The next day, the high school kids had a march to protest the refusal of their principal to let the civil rights workers speak at their graduation.

OKTIBBEHA CO. (starkville)--HELP report: On Feb. 4, Roosevelt Vaughn talked to Miss Ellis about Project HELP. (Welfare Dept.). She said she didn't know anything about it.

CLAY CO.--On Feb. 3, about 500 people went down to the Welfare Dept. with applications to get assistance. The people used their own application forms. The lady first refused to take the applications since they weren't the official forms, but later she took them and started putting people on welfare. 30-40 people picketed in front of the office to push for getting people on welfare.

On Feb. 5, there was First District Nominating Convention to select a Congressional Candidate. No decision was reached.

SECOND DISTRICT**CARROLL--After federal registrars had been in the county for about two or three weeks, registration dropped off to only 5 or 7 people per day. Justice Dept. lawyers came down to talk to the FDP. The workers urged that federal registrars be sent to churches around the county so people could get to them more easily. The lawyers asked for a map indicating which churches they recommended.

The JD was also about to file a suit in federal court against the Carroll Co. school board for not complying with a court order to integrate 4 grades last September, and for having more courses at the white school. However, before the suit came up, it was settled out of court.

HOLMES CO.--On the evening of Jan. 26, the store of an active FDP member had two bombs thrown into it, and another active member had a cross burned in his backyard.

On Feb. 1, an investigator from the Department of Agriculture came to Holmes Co. to investigate the ASCS elections. He said he would be there for about a month, and that there were 3 or 4 other federal investigators in the state. (If there is an ASCS investigator in your county, or if anything else interesting comes up around ASCS, please let us know.)

This is from the Holmes Co. FDP Newsletter: There are more and more jobs opening up. We would like to start keeping lists of people who need jobs, their names, their addresses and ages. This will help when we hear of job openings. Someone in each community who is interested in working on the Labor Subcommittee should start making lists like this of people in their area who need jobs. These lists should be turned in to the Lexington FDP office.

(Have you organized your subcommittees yet? Who is on them? What are they doing? Please let us know.)

QUITMAN CO. (Marks)-- We had a friendly with Miss Dukes of the Welfare Dept, and discovered the following: 1) as soon as the contract for Project HELP is signed, three people on welfare will be signed to distribute commodities. The Bd. of Supervisors has not yet signed. As previously mentioned, the program will be used to extend commodities for two months. 2) The Work Experience Program (Mid-State Opportunities Inc.) has been cut in half owing to what Mrs. Dukes referred to as that damn war. Originally 140 people were to have been hired from the Welfare caseload.

(Note: compare this piece of information with Ed King's statement about the Vietnam war and the Poverty Program, at the end of this mailing.)

At least six children will go to the white school next semester.

The roads have been considerably improved, but much still needs to be done. Two girls completed the Citizenship Education Program, and hopefully will set up school soon. About 320 children have been signed up for Headstart.

DELTA--A Poor People's Conference was held over the weekend of Jan. 28-30 in Mt. Beulah, called by the MFDP, MFLU, and the Delta Ministry. Out of it came a telegram to President Johnson asking for help for all the homeless, jobless people in the Delta. People at the meeting also decided to sit in at a deserted Air Force Base in Greenville to demand that it be used as a housing project, food distribution center, and job training center. After a day and a half, they were carried out by Air Force Police. Do you think the reason that Project HELP is finally being started is because they sat in at the Air Force Base? (OVER)

FOURTH DISTRICT--CLARKE CO.--HELP report: On Jan. 20 ~~the~~ a committee went to the welfare office to ask and make requests about Project HELP. Mrs. Triggs said she didn't know anything about it. She finally admitted that she knew about it, and that she had not intended to hire any Negroes in the program, and if she were going to hire Negroes, she would contact the principal of the Negro high school. She finally agreed to hire half whites and half Negroes, and asked Rev. Killingsworth to submit a list of names.

LEAKE CO. (Olahoma report)--There was a meeting here Thursday night with Jesse Morris of the Poor People's Corporation, since the community is working to get one started in this county. People went to the Conference in Mt. Beulah.

NESHOBA CO. (philadelphia)--HELP report: On Jan. 24, Rev. Collier went to the Welfare Office to inquire about Project HELP. They told him that it hadn't been approved yet by the Board of Supervisors, but that when it was, they would let FDP know.

RANKIN CO.--(Fannin community) We in Rankin Co. are still working for Freedom, although at this time of the year things do move a little slow, and there aren't nearly enough faithful workers to stick with a job until it is well done. One of the main things that we are still working on is registration, even though most of the people in the movement circle are registered we still have the problem of how to get the other people to the court house. The old fear of what people will think, some older people fear their welfare checks will be cut off, others are self-satisfied.

We continue to tell everyone to pay their poll tax.

Also in the Pisgah Community we have started our GDM on a voluntary basis. The parents are very cooperative.

Also we have started a drive to help raise a portion of the \$85000 for the expense of carrying on our FDP work.

We have tried school integration but as yet hasn't anything come of it. The law official have frightened some parents, crosses were burned in the driveways. Do you want to know what the sheriff said, "Don't worry about it, it doesn't mean a thing, if you have any trouble call me." I guess he call trouble when your house get burned down.

Our pet peeve in Rankin Co. is our pastors and teachers and so-called satisfied people, who aren't about to stick their necks out for themselves or their fellow brothers. I wonder what happened to all that love they preach and teach about all the time. It's time that people in Rankin Co. wake up and find out who their real friends are, the so-called little people. (from) Mrs. Allean Adams

FIFTH DISTRICT--HARRISON CO. (Gulfport)--They integrated the bowling alley one night. All the best Negro bowlers went to the alley, and were very well received. Mrs. Keyes is working on welfare complaints. She plans to get the names of 500-600 people who have not been getting sufficient welfare. About a week later, 6 Negro guys were denied admission to another bowling alley. The owner locked them out, and said that he wouldn't let them in until Mrs. Keyes talked to his lawyer.

The people in the county are collecting food and clothing for the people in Tent City.

JACKSON CO. (Moss Point)--Recently they just changed the boundaries of Moss Point, so the FDP is now working on getting who now live inside the city boundaries to get their names on the city books.

When Mrs. Grandison received the leaflet about the Poor People's Conference at Mt. Beulah, she took it down to the county supervisor. He said that there were no problems in Jackson Co., because they had welfare and commodities. She said she knew lots of people by name who needed welfare and weren't getting it. He said name one. She did. So he called up the lady, arranged for the welfare dept. to go interview her, and also for the county to pay her \$15 a month. Mrs. Grandison says she's going to bring a lot more people down to the welfare office, and if they are refused, she'll bring them to the county supervisor.

 IMPORTANT REQUEST ABOUT CONGRESSIONAL AND SENATORIAL CANDIDATES:

The FDP is supporting 4 candidates to run for Congress, and a candidate to run for the Senate (against Senator Eastland) this November. We are sure you would like for these candidates to come talk to the people in your county. In order to make this possible, we need to know when you have precinct and county meetings. Would each county please send us the time and place of all regular meetings--community meetings, precinct meetings, beat meetings, county meetings, etc. Also, let us know if you are having any particular meetings where you would like your FDP-supported Congressional or Senatorial candidates to speak.

MINUTES OF THE FDP STATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, Feb. 3, 1966, in Jackson

Members in attendance: Lawrence Guyot, Mrs. Devine, Mrs. Palmer, Mr. Miles, Mr. Carr, Aaron Henry. Also George Williams, James Pittman, Mr. Cleo Jackson, and Mrs. Susie Ruffin.

A report of Strike City was given, pointing out that there were 100 families now living there and that there was a leadership council elected by the peoples now living in Strike City which is made up of people in FDP, FLU, and Delta Ministry.

It was discussed and agreed that there is theneed in Mississippi for the immediate placement of Federal marshall with the power to arrest in the State. Aron Henry pointed out that in attomps of this kind that it would be helpful and necessary to get the assistance of the Civil Rights leadership conference. There was a discussion of Sundays meeting which is called to prepare to deal with the problem that will occur in communities which will have this type of problem. The present attempt is to get 2 people from each County to attend the meeting in Jackson. Mrs. Lawrence, Isaac Froster have agreed to attend. There was discussion and agreement pending the confirmation of the other members of the excc. Comm. revelant to the filing of the suits dealing with changing the basic of selection for Federal Juries in the Northern and Southern district. It was also pointed out by A Henry that the position of non-responsibility for "Operation Help" was jointly then by Mrs. E. Gandy and the board of Supervison and that consideration should be given to the migrant farm workers program.

The person to contact about the Migrant farm workers is Tom Cater s, Wash, D. C, It was agreeded that we would fight for the funding of the CDCM about question of the board based participation of the poor.

At the request of Mr. Miles at the last meeting, Mrs. Susie Ruffins was invited to present her side of the story dealing with the printing of the News Letter. Back grown information was presented by Lawrence Guyot pointing out the publishing financing and content of the News Letter was in fact determined by an individual specifically Mrs. Ruffins and not by the MFDP. Mrs. Ruffins pointed out that a bad picture of her being present and that she had been ask by Lawrence Guyot to act as editor of the News letter immediatley after the Atlantic City, and that the people of Mississippi wanted the News Letter and that she would print it regardless. She further allodges that is a prasonality problem between herself and members of the State Exe. Comm. because of an argument that allegedly took place in Washington D.C. dealing with financial record of the MFDP. Aaron Henry pointed out the basic question involed when he pointed out that MFDP on the case of the publication of any Bibel statement or articles would not be dealt with legally in its entirety but that the state Exe. Comm. would be answerable collectively and individually. There was an agreement that Mrs. Ruffins had the right to Freedom of expression and id Mrs. Ruffin want to publishe the News Letter, Magazine, periodical or any other form of expression, she should do so but the that the MFDP must live in the Political position as far as its eminies are concered would not allow the MFDP to be operated in the same manner it was operated in immediatly after the Atantic City. A. Henry said that we are no longer neophytes. Mr. Miles pointed out that if Mr. Guyot had the right to ask Mrs. Ruffins to print the News Letter that he had the right to ask her not to print it. Mr. Henry ask Mrs. Ruffins if she was concerned about remanding the editor of the News Letter or was this a question of the News Letter being printed or of her Freedom to print it. This question was not answer.

The State Executive Committee has definitely ruled that the Newbeeter should be discontinued pending complete revie by the Excutive Committee and the formation of an editorial board which would be compose of those who would be legally responsible if that the board did not exust.

FREEDOM,

E--3--66

TEACH-IN on WAR IN VIETNAM PLANNED FOR FEBRUARY 13 AT TOUGALOO COLLEGE.
The Tougaloo Ad Hoc Committee and the MFDP were co-sponsors of a planned discussion of the War in Vietnam. As of February 7, most of the people we invited to speak seem unable to attend. So we are not sure now if the Teach-In will take place after all.

If you are interested in attending, please call the MFDP State Office in Jackson later in the week, to find out if the Teach-In will still be held.

Here is the telegram that the White House sent us, after the Poor People's Conference at Ft. Belvoir sent President Johnson a telegram asking for help for all the poor people in Mississippi:

Washington DC, Feb. 5, 1966

The President has asked us to thank you for your wire. The Office of Economic Opportunity has already funded programs for Mississippi to the extent of nearly twenty-five million dollars during the past fifteen months. The Star program and Project Headstart are outstanding examples of programs which have reached the poor in Mississippi. Only this past week we released the first increment of a \$1,600,000 demonstration grant to the State Welfare Department to develop a distribution system for \$24,000,000 worth of surplus food--which will directly benefit the poor. Because many of the needs cited in your wire are beyond the capability of this agency to serve, the White House is also bringing this matter to the attention of Secretary Wirtz (Labor), Secretary Gardner (Health, Education and Welfare), and Secretary Freeman (Agriculture). These departments are all deeply committed to helping the poor. We sincerely hope that we will be able to do more for the Mississippi poor through our community action program as all of the people of Mississippi united in a common effort to alleviate the plight of the poor. This will require the efforts, cooperation and dedication of all elements of society toward the objective of ultimately eliminating poverty. The same holds true in all parts of our country. A great society is a society that is willing to work together. With every best wish. Sincerely,

Thomas A. Gee, Deputy Executive Secretary

HEADSTART MAY NOT BE REFUNDED. WRITE TO WASHINGTON!

When we heard that Headstart may not get funds for future programs, the FDP sent the following telegram to President Johnson and Sargent Shriver, who is head of the Poverty Program.

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party is shocked that after five months of waiting the Child Development Group of Mississippi (CDGM) has not been funded by the OEO. To hundreds of people in Mississippi, CDGM represents a program designed to provide jobs for hundreds of people who are now receiving welfare and will become eligible for welfare. By withholding these funds the OEO is participating in a relocation of poverty. Headstart could provide economic stability, although temporary, to people who would otherwise have to leave Mississippi. We believe CDGM offers to the young people of Mississippi order, stability, and preparation for the political changes which the President referred to in his State of the Union address. We demand that immediate steps be taken to fund the staff and operations of 100 or more CDGM centers in the state.

Signed Lawrence Guyot, Chairman
Peggy Jean Connor, Secretary
Mississippi Freedom Democratic
Party

This copy of a telegram ~~was~~ sent by the FDP to the President and Sargent Shriver was in support of the funding of Headstart. The attempt to separate money and politics is foolish. Headstart should get the money that the government has available in order to carry out a program that has benefitted thousands of Mississippians, and as Chairman of the FDP I ask everyone in Mississippi to write to the OEO in Washington immediately and demand that OEO provide money so that Headstart may be carried out. The letters should be sent to

Lyndon Johnson
The White House
Washington DC

Sargent Shriver
Office of Economic Opportunity
Washington DC

Here is the list of 7 demands that the people were asking for when they sat-in at the Greenville Air Force Base:

January 31, 1966, Greenville, Miss.

WHY WE ARE HERE AT THE GREENVILLE AIR FORCE BASE

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

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 WE ARE 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 ~~xx~~ all of 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 which are fit to eat. The commodities we get now are old and full of bugs and weevils. We want fresh vegetables, fruits, and meat. We want to decide what foods we eat. 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 land 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 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 to ask of President Johnson whose side are you on--the poor people's or the millionaires?

POOR PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE
THE POOR PEOPLE ON THE AIR FORCE BASE

PLEASE ALSO SEND TELEGRAMS PROTESTING THE MAKE-UP OF THE STATE ADVISORY BOARD OF PROJECT "HEL P" The state advisory board for Project HELP, chosen by Miss Evelyn Gandy, State Commissioner of Welfare, is integrated, but there are no poor people on it. Please send letters and telegrams protesting the make-up of the Board to the OEO in Washington. (Remember, the MFDP sent a list of names to be considered for the Board to Miss Gandy, but none of these names were chosen.)

Send letters and telegrams to

Mr. Sam Yette
Office of Economic Opportunity
1200-19th St. NW
Washington DC

Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party
 Sunday February 6th, 1966

The next meeting will take place on Sunday, ~~xxxxx~~ February 20, at the Masonic Temple, 1072 Lynch Street, Jackson.

Report of a meeting that took place in Jackson with representatives of the MFDP from all around the state, plus representatives of Tent City.

The meeting was to go over what came out of the Mt. Beulah & Air Force Base

First Jesse Harris gave a background report on what had happened up to now.

Jesse Harris --- Attempt was made involve poor people who had never had a chance to work in the poverty program, also those kicked off Delta plantations. We called a Poor People's Convention and 600-700 people came. Out of our discussions came the decision to go to the Greenville Air Force Base, to go there to make our demands. About 60 out of the 800 went. After 2 days we were told to leave by the city officials. When we refused, people were carried out. So they went to Tent City. They said they want no part of the government, they want a life of their own. Those people elected their own leaders and are ready to start a new life. They don't know anything about the FDP or the Freedom Labor Union or the Delta Ministry. Our idea is to build a city with training programs. They want to buy up some more land around ~~xxxx~~ them and build a new city. Things have made those poor people mad. Has it made ~~xxxxx~~ the FDP mad? Most of them have not been involved in civil rights or nothing.

After Jesse gave this introduction, the people there discussed the problem of the people in Tent City and others with the same problems, and what could be done about them.

It was mentioned that there was a choice whether to set up Tent Cities in other areas, or just make one big city. Guyot said we now have to go beyond voter registration to land and jobs, because if even if Negroes get registered, we still have to worry about keeping them here. Isaac Foster said that the land at Tent City in Tribbett is not enough for everyone who wants to live there. Mr. Steptoe, who had led a workshop on land at Mt. Beulah then spoke. He offered 100 acres of his own land, with timber on it, for people to live on, and said he knew several other men who had land and timber to offer. He also said we should start providing jobs for our own people and not asking the white man to do it. Foster said that the people in Tent City had learned they got no help from the federal government and they are thinking more independent of the government as well as economically. He added that there were about 1000 families without jobs who would come to a new city.

Jesse Harris said that he thought the poor people in the Delta would want to stay in the Delta, and that poor people in Amite Co. should use Mr. Steptoe's land. Mr. Steptoe said that the land he owned he would let people live on and build on for as long as they needed, but if they moved the houses would go back to the owner. Robert James asked if it wouldn't be better to let the people buy the land and be independent. Ted Seaver listed three ways we could raise money to buy the land we needed-- 1) raise it ourselves; 2) get it from the Federal Government; 3) get it from foreign countries. Guyot said that we should try to make the federal government move by going ahead and building houses ourselves, saying You wouldn't do it for us, so we'll do it ourselves.

Jack Ayers asked about the people in Tent City wanting a independent government, did they mean an independent city, or independent of the United States? He also asked why these people weren't here to speak for themselves, why we were talking about and making decisions about them. He said some way should be found so they can buy their own land if they want to.

Jac Wasserman told about a federal program that paid part of the cost of housing for migrant and farm workers. Then the people made and accepted a motion to get as much as land as possible that can be used as long as necessary, to get as much technical skill as possible, and to try to get federal money.

 Mrs. Devine said that nothing had been done about Operation HELP on the local level until the sit-in at Greenville. It is now starting Feb. 7. People should go down right away and apply for the jobs. (See other page, beginning with "Counties participating in All-Needy Surplus Food Program.)