

## EAST BAY FRIENDS OF SNCC, DECEMBER 1966

East Bay Friends of SNCC plans to put its newsletter on a regular monthly basis, devoting more space to news of the movement, particularly in the South. As is well known, such news is not given much coverage in the press and there is a tendency for the day-to-day activities of SNCC and the local organizations with which it works to drop from sight altogether. As you probably know, such activities are still in great need of support. Therefore, we hope to provide some of the information and help maintain your interest and support.

East Bay Friends of SNCC has had its problems recently finding volunteers to work on fund-raising and informational events. At the same time, we have not wanted to give up altogether, particularly in light of the support you, our loyal contributors, have given us over the years. We hope that the expanded newsletter operation will make up for the lack of public events formerly scheduled by our group. This is not to say that we will not be involved in any events of this sort. We will keep you informed of any we do plan.

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THE LOWNDES COUNTY FREEDOM ORGANIZATION, the only political party in America controlled and organized by black people, was defeated in Lowndes County, Alabama last month. The final returns were:

### Sheriff

Sydney Logan, Jr. (LCFO) 1643  
Frank Ryals (Dem) 2320

### Coroner

Emory Ross (LCFO) 1640  
Jack Golson (Dem) 2265

### Tax Assessor

Alice L. Moore (LCFO) 1604  
Charlie Sullivan (Dem) 2265

### Tax Collector

Frank Miles, Jr. (LCFO) 1603  
Iva D. Sullivan (Dem) 2268

### Board of Education, Place #3

Robert Logan (LCFO) 1664  
David M. Lyon (Rep) 1937

### Board of Education, Place #4

John Hinson (LCFO) 1666  
Tommy Coleman (Rep) 1966

### Board of Education, Place #5

Willie M. Strickland (LCFO) 1600  
C. B. Haigler (Dem) 2170

It came as no surprise to the leadership that the LCFO lost. Black people in Lowndes County have not voted in 75 years. Almost no one had ever voted. An entire population had been totally excluded from politics. This is important to remember.

There were several major reasons for the defeat.

**FEAR:** Fear was strongest among those who lived and worked on the plantations. Many were told they would be kicked off if they voted for the LCFO, or if they voted at all. Other workers were brought in on trucks from the plantations, given sample ballots with the white candidates marked, taken in a group into the polling place, not allowed to talk with the Negro poll watchers and then trucked back to the plantation. Others were afraid that their employers would know how they voted. This seems strange to people who are used to a secret ballot. It's not. Whites built the voting machines, installed them, ran the polls, made up the rules; the voting booths were in white sections of the county. From the point of view of people who had never voted before, why wouldn't the whites know how they voted? Black people in Lowndes County do not all own cars or trucks. Many old people could not leave their homes comfortably. The LCFO organized car pools and pick-up routes, but it was impossible during the 10 hours the polls were open to check every home in the county. Some people were confused by having to vote twice, once in the primary and once in the general election.

The whites pulled a very effective trick. They did not assign people to vote in the precinct where they live. There are eight precincts in the county. Only about half voted in their own precinct. Others had to be driven across the county to vote 10 or 15 miles away. This also meant that if a voter lost his voting slip and did not remember where he was to vote, a driver had to take him to three or four precincts, checking the rolls each time to find his name. This caused a great deal of confusion. Husbands and wives would have to vote in different sections of the county. The LCFO plans to change this before the next election. LCFO leaders feel this was a deliberate attempt to confuse the voters.

UNCLE TOMISM: There is a small black professional and middle-class group in Lowndes. They do "all right" under the white regime and most of them, according to LCFO leaders, either voted Democratic or split their votes, marking the ballot for some of the LCFO candidates. "When Moses crossed the Red Sea he left some people behind," Carmichael said at a mass meeting election eve, "We're going to leave some Uncle Toms behind." Hulett said he thought that about 300 Negroes voted Democratic. Since all the whites, with a few exceptions voted Democratic; that means that roughly 2000 whites voted. That seems to be the top white voting strength. The feeling of the LCFO leaders is that the Toms will come around in the next two years as they see the LCFO growing stronger.

FRAUD: The whites used two kinds of fraud; the "graveyard vote" and "helping." Before the election there were 2700 white voters registered. This was about 700 more than were eligible. The extra white voters were either dead or had moved out of the county. Many of these voted by proxy in the November election. The LCFO poll watchers were instructed to challenge all whites who were not who they claimed to be. Even if there was the slightest suspicion that someone was claiming to be someone he wasn't, the poll watchers and clerks were told to challenge. Many white voters were challenged, but in some polls, like Sandy Ridge, home of the white sheriff, the LCFO had no poll watchers. Again, the black people had no experience in observing an election. Some left the polls when they were ordered to by the white officials, though the officials had no right to do that. Others were ordered not to take notes, which they had a right to do. In some cases, like Sandy Ridge, poor planning resulted in the absence of poll watchers. Plantation owners instructed their tenants to ask the white officials for "help." The whites of course told the Negroes to vote Democratic.

TERROR: Dusk fell before the polls closed. In Fort Deposit, the courthouse lights are kept on every evening of the year. But as Andrew Jones, a resident of Fort Deposit, and a leader in the LCFO, drove up to the polling place after the polls closed, the lights were off. Jones had come to pick up the LCFO poll watchers. As he stepped from his car he was approached by a group of whites. One of them, a Fort Deposit merchant, was holding a pistol and swung at Jones. Mr. Jones blocked the blow with his hand, staggered back, and was struck from behind with a rifle butt. He was beaten on the head with the rifle butt and a tire chain by members of the mob. One of the two Lowndes County Negro deputies sauntered up as one of the whites was pointing his rifle at Jones' head. The deputy made no arrests, but LCFO people feel that his presence saved Jones from being shot. "Mr. Jones was the last person I thought they'd try to get," Carmichael said. "He's one of the toughest men in the county." Jones had been offered a house and land by the whites if he would ask Negroes to vote Democratic. He refused, and continued to live in Fort Deposit.

After the election returns were in, armed guards were assigned to the homes of the LCFO leaders. It was feared that if the whites were brave enough to attack Jones, they might try to attack other LCFO leaders. No other assaults took place; the willingness of Lowndes County residents to defend themselves may have been the reason why. Jones was taken to a Selma hospital. When he returned to Fort Deposit several days later, his family had been evicted from their home. The LCFO is now buying land and will build him another home. He still refuses to leave Fort Deposit.



THE BLACK PANTHER IS STRONG: They are not downhearted by the defeat. They are together and they will win. To live in Lowndes County under the dictatorship of the whites is to be tough, disciplined and resourceful. They will not be turned back now, so close to victory. Stokely Carmichael said at the mass meeting, "When you mention Selma, people say - There's some mean white folks down there. But when you mention Lowndes County, they say -- There's some mean niggers down there.!" (excerpted from The Movement)

IN ALABAMA as a result of black people voting in those elections for the first time in their lives, the white landowners are retaliating by evicting large masses of black farm workers from their land.

GREENE COUNTY: The Greene County Freedom Organization reports that there have been a series of evictions, resulting in 70 families being evicted from the land which has been their only home for years. Some families have been given a deadline for moving on December 3rd and others on January 1st. Meetings and discussions are currently underway among black people there to decide on the necessary steps and remedies to deal with this problem.

LOWNDES COUNTY: Several families have already been evicted from their homes and are now living in tents. Many more families expect eviction notices after the picking season is over. The Lowndes County Christian Movement in conjunction with the Lowndes County Freedom Party is now in the process of purchasing land and building houses for these people. The movement so far has 2 houses, has bought land for 2 families, and has begun construction on 2 houses which they hope to have finished within this week.

#### OTHER POST ELECTION REPORTS:

Pine Bluff, Arkansas: Vince O'Connor reported that there were a couple of vote fraud cases in the Nov. 8 elections in Gould, Ark. The election was stolen from Mrs. Carrie Dilworth a black woman running for Mayor of Gould. One precinct didn't even turn in their votes, and others simply said that there were no votes for Mrs. Dilworth although Vince knows that there were definitely votes for her in these precincts.

In Wabaseka, Ark. Vince and other freedom workers are writing letters to John Doar of the Justice Dept. as a result of the reported defeat of a black man running for city council. In that town, white people from outside of the town voted, there were segregated voting lines, and other irregularities were reported. The people will probably contest the election and are now in process of lining people up to testify. There were no black people on the polls as clerks or judges outside of Pine Bluff, and there only a few were allowed in the all black precincts.

GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI: In a special run-off election for supervisor of Beat 3, on Nov. 22, W. L. Kellum (white) defeated Rev. JD Collins (black). Prior to this, Rev. Collins has won the position by a slim margin in the Nov. 8th elections. The small victory margin was given as a reason for the run-off election.

From the Atlanta WATS Line:

ATLANTA, GA.: In an all black ghetto of N.W. Atlanta, 3 courageous black women have spearheaded a picket line and boycott of the "One Hour Martinizing" Laundry and Dry Cleaners located in the Great Savings Shopping Center on the corner of Ashby and Simpson. Annie Willis, Mattie Bell Jones, and Claudia Leehead, along with 5 other women are former employees who began picketing the cleaners early Monday morning, Nov. 28th, and plan to continue until they are re-hired and granted fair working conditions and wages. In an exclusive interview with members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the 3 ladies exposed a shocking story of sweatshop working conditions imposed upon them by the management which has resulted in cheap slave labor for the white managers--Mr. Cardell and Mr. Camp--and for the white owners of the Martinizing Laundry chain. Their grievances include the following:

1. The 8 women were all fired within one month for arbitrary reasons simply because they had the courage to speak up to the manager and demand that he hear and discuss their problems.
2. One lady had to train an 18 year old white boy who later replaced her on the job.
3. The employees have to work from 8 to 12 hours a day, depending on the work load, 6 days a week, for \$36.00. They were seldom paid full salaries, the manager deducted arbitrary sums for social security without specifying the exact amount, and upon firing the 8 workers, he refused to give them full salary and vacation pay.
4. The managers generally mistreat the customers, curse them, and frequently mess up their clothing.

As of 2:00 P.M. on Monday, the picketing ladies reported that their boycott was successful, that business had been drastically cut down, and the management is worried. Policemen constantly drove by, parked and surveyed the scene. The manager was seen shaking hands with one policeman, and then threatened to have the picketers arrested. The 8 ladies are determined to brave the cold weather, threats of arrest, and jail, until their demands are met:

WEST POINT, MISSISSIPPI: John Buffington and Ike Coleman are heading the WP SNCC project and are making much progress in helping to organize the black community there. The project office is a clean, well kept, spacious office with several books for the use of the entire area. The residents of that area are now in the process of running several Coops and organizing new ones. They built a new building which houses their own garment factory, and have a woodcraft coop which is doing a booming business, particularly in African wood jewelry. There is also a candle coop which makes and sells wax candles. One of their most successful operations is an insurance company which provides unemployment compensation to black factory workers when they are laid off or unemployed, and has a credit union as part of the company. In connection with this company, the members also file discrimination in employment suits in cases where workers are arbitrarily fired or subjected to other forms of discrimination, and guarantees all contributors free legal service.

In the near future, Buffington plans to open the "Ebony Lounge" a tavern and lounge which will be located in a huge corner building in the heart of the black community. Buffington personally painted and decorated the lounge, and residents there are very enthusiastic about this venture.



NEWS FROM DELANO: Fifteen months later, the strike continues against 32 companies, as only 3 of the original 35 struck ranches have come to terms with the Union. These are the following: Sierra Vista, Borrego Springs, Arvin Ranch and peanut sheds; Christian Brothers; Goldberg, fields and sheds.

At the DiGiorgio Ranch in Arvin we won the election by 187 to 97. In his peanut sheds the election was held by the National Labor Relations Board and we won 10 to 6. There is an election at DiGiorgio's Marysville Ranch in June of 1967. Now with Goldbergs elections in the fields, we won 285 to 35, and we can have an election in the sheds when we want it.

The most recent boycott is against A. Perelli-Minetti & Sons because he signed a contract with the Teamsters, who brought in 8 strikebreakers for the field and then signed them up on a contract when Perelli-Minetti workers were out on an official strike in the field. They had asked for UFWOC to be their official representative. Antonio Perelli-Minetti said that he would not talk with UFWOC representatives by any means and that it was not an official strike. Since then we have put a boycott on Perelli-Minetti products, and the boycott has met with some problems. The reason for this is that most people think that the strike is over. Or they think that since we are now together with the AFL-CIO, all of our problems are over and we don't need help from the community any more. This is not so: we still need the help of the community in winning this boycott and many more to come. There are many ways that you can help in the community. Number one, you can ask your local liquor store dealer to take Perelli-Minetti products off their shelves. The products are:

Wines: Ambassador, Eleven Cellars, Red Rooster, Greystone, Guasti, Calwa, FI, and Tribuno Vermouth.

Brandies: Aristocrat, A. R. Morrow, Victor Hugo.

There will be picket lines at liquor stores and distributors here in the City of Oakland, and in the area. We need your support on these picket lines. There is still need for food and clothing for the four hundred families that are on strike. There are still many needy families in Delano. Many of the families will not have Christmas toys for their children unless you send them, because they are still on strike. This is how you play a very large part in the strike.

(Report from Richard Flowers, SNCC worker in Delano)

If you are interested in picketing, call the SNCC office for time and locations, (549-0593) or 655-3256.

If you are able to get any liquor stores to remove the above products, please send us their names in the return envelope. This will prevent their being picketed.

CO-OP ELECTIONS: Because of the conflict within the Co-op between those who see the Co-op as simply a business and those who see it as a community organization, friends of SNCC should make a point of voting for the three members of the Board of Directors to be elected in January. Ballots naming the fifteen candidates will be delivered around December 27 and must be mailed in or brought to the membership meeting on January 20. Although we did not have a chance to question all the candidates, three known friends of SNCC -- Larry Duga, Ray Thompson and Robert Treuhart are on the slate. Be sure and vote because such issues as free speech tables, labeling boycotted products, and aid to other Co-ops here and in the South may be at stake.

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Chizzie Mayall will give another chinese cooking class evenings in February. Her first was very successful. For information, call her at BE 2-7315.

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DEAR FRIENDS,

When Stokely Carmichael spoke in Lowndes County on election eve last month, he said, "...all we need is the will, the courage, and the love in our hearts." Perhaps because he was speaking in the poorest county in Alabama, Carmichael did not mention the remaining essential ingredient: Money. The people of Lowndes County have given and given and given again. The writer of this letter has seen them put \$1 and \$5 bills into regular weekly collections - the equivalent for many of their family's daily income.

We have no doubt that if you, our friends in California, lived in Alabama, you would provide the will, the courage and the love that are necessary. The question is, will you help provide the money?

Sincerely,

EAST BAY FRIENDS OF SNCC

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