



NOW !



The Voice Of Freedom

No. 2

1017 Lynch St., Jackson, Miss.

Monday, May 25, 1964

GREENVILLE STAFF MEETING

Over 50 members of the Mississippi COFO staff came to Greenville, where a staff meeting was held May 11-14. Attendance was strong the first day, but became sparser as the meeting progressed. Some of the more important events of the meeting were: An explanation and discussion of the pending civil rights bill. An extended discussion and a policy decision that we will welcome the aid of lawyers who are members of the National Lawyers Guild, despite the opposition to that group by the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc. (the INC fund). An explanation, discussion, and role playing of the precinct meeting procedure. A discussion of the Summer Project. A discussion of the organizational structure of COFO, which resulted in the setting up of a modified form of the Executive Committee, consisting of the five district directors, plus Bob Moses, Dave Dennis, and the Jackson office manager, who is yet to be appointed. The Committee will meet every two weeks, with each member representing the staff in his area. The staff will meet monthly, with review power over Executive Committee decisions, and authority to make long range decisions. It is hoped that this set-up will be representative enough of the staff, while being efficient enough to get the decisions made.

Canton: Canton police made three charges on the same offence, when they ticketed Rev. Grady Poulard and Rev. Lyle Weibel on charges of having switched plates on a Hertz rented car, then arrested and held Rev. Poulard overnight on the same charge. Previously the police towed the car away from in front of the house where Rev. Poulard was staying, in the middle of the night, without notifying the Reverend, and then charged him towing fees. All this happened despite proof from Hertz that the plates were OK. The NCC is planning a false arrest and damage suit against Canton Police.

Canton: A white man fired four shots into the side of the Freedom House in Canton, after fail-

MADISON COUNTY RALLY

Mississippi Negroes are the superior race, according to James Farmer, National Director of CORE, because of their dedication to the cause of Freedom, their use of non-violence, and their suffering. Despite threats on his life, Mr. Farmer came as the featured speaker for a large political rally held May 23 near Sharron, Miss.

Other speakers included Mrs. Gray, Mr. Houston, and Dave Dennis. Rev. Grady Poulard, of the National Council of Churches, gave the invocation. Rev. McRee of Canton was Master of Ceremonies.

Large numbers of policemen surrounded the farm, including the deputized head of the local white Citizens' Council. These men were supposed to provide protection for the visiting speakers, but there were reports of police turning some people away from the farm for no apparent reason.

Food at the picnic--barbecued chicken, salad, soft drinks, and cookies--was supplied by the local merchants

ing to gain entrance "in order to talk." In the house at the time were John Newman, Rev. Grady Poulard, Theodis Hewitt, and Roger Phoenix. The police claimed they were unable to find the man, although Hewitt believes the shooter was in the car driven by the investigating policemen.

Hattiesburg: Seven people were arrested while picketing the Forrest County courthouse, although up to now, 7 has been an acceptable number to police. Five were northern ministers, Revs. Larry Bergstresen, Arlan Dohrenburg, Gary Alexander, David Watters, and Peter Vanderveen. Two were local, Ulysses Everett, and Ben Hartsfield. Their trial is now set for June 12. Smith and Waltzer are handling the case.

Belzoni: Seven COFO workers en route to Jackson from Greenville were arrested on investigation of burglary after their car developed engine trouble one mile north of town. Doug Smith, Jesse Harris, Jesse Davis, Jesse Morris, Lafayette Surney, Larry Rubin, and Mac Cotton were held overnight and then released without formal charges being filed.

PROGRAM REPORTS

WHITE COMMUNITY PROJECT

Plans are progressing for work in the white community in Mississippi, reports Ed Hamlet. Our list of contacts is increasing daily; we are impressed with the number of people who wish change to come. Three areas of involvement seem possible at present: 1) Voter registration project in the working class community. Many white people across the state are not registered; many of these same people are economically oppressed. 2) Community service project; this might include such things as tutorials, day-care centers, and recreation. 3) Work with middle-class moderates and liberals through local and statewide civic groups concerned with human relations and social justice. It is hoped that contact can be made with local law enforcement officers in order to communicate to them the true purposes of the Summer Project. It is believed that direct confrontation of these men by white southerners will be beneficial. As Ed sees this program, it should be carried out entirely by white southerners.

SUMMER PROJECT

We have now received over 1000 applications, according to Margaret Cunningham, and new ones are still coming in at the rate of 12 per day. About 800 have been accepted and 50 rejected. We are at the point where no more people are being accepted for work in Freedom Schools, no more for a stay of less than 6 weeks, and no more requests for application are being filled. We have about reached the practical limit on people. The applicants range in age from 18 to 39, and come from as far away as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. About 15-18% of all applicants are Negroes, the largest group coming from Spellman College.

COMMUNITY CENTERS

Some ninety of the summer project applicants have indicated that they want to work in Community Centers. As the program is shaping up, there will be adult classes offered in subjects such as health, pre-natal care, child care, homemaking, home repair, governmental aid programs, welfare and relief, legal aid, film programs, reading and drama clubs, and training in such skills as upholstery, mechanics, television and radio repair, and clerical work. We still need additional places for Community centers. If you know of an available facility, such as a church or school, please let Annette Ponder at the COFO office in Jackson know immediately.

SUMMER PROJECT ORIENTATION

The general details on the orientation session for summer project people are beginning to materialize. The orientation sessions will be held at Western College for Women, Oxford, Ohio, June 14-20 and June 21-27. The latter session will be for Freedom School and Community Center people, the former for everyone else. The agenda for the sessions will include Southern History, non-violence, legal and communications workshops, etc. Those of the staff who are conducting the sessions will have to be in Ohio by June 12.

LIBRARY PROJECT

The next several weeks on the library project will be devoted to sorting books, reports Emmy Schrader. 20 Iowa students and one professional librarian are coming down for the first two weeks in June.

There will be 5 students each in the storage spots at Greenwood, Holly Springs, and Jackson. These students will be sorting books by type, arranging that all libraries in the state will eventually get roughly the same assortment of book types. The remaining five students will be split among Carthage, Vicksburg and Laurel. In these places with the help of the roving librarian, a cataloging system will be set up for the books. The catalog system will be developed as much as possible by local people; thus as the summer people leave, the library will naturally be left in local hands.

POLITICAL PROGRAM

The campaigns are going badly. It appears as though it was a mistake to take on so many campaigns without committing a much larger staff to the task. At present, few speeches are being made, little money is being collected, and virtually no organizing is being done. Freedom registration is moving slowly. Appointing or finding registrars is not enough. What is needed is much more organized registration drives.

The precinct meetings and challenges are being organized slowly. Workshops are being held in the Meridian area, in the 5th district, around Jackson, and in some Delta communities. Work in other areas is just getting under way.

CITIZENSHIP SCHOOLS

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference will sponsor a curriculum in citizenship education in ten counties this summer. Classes in citizenship, government, voter registration, literacy, non-violence, and community development will be taught.

The classes will be taught by community leaders desiring to help their friends and neighbors understand the responsibilities of first-class citizenship. The leaders will attend SCLC's monthly teacher training workshops, returning to set up their own classes. The classes will meet in homes, churches, beauty shops, and other community centers. This will be done in cooperation with the COFO summer project.

The next teacher training workshop will be held at Dorchester Center, McIntosh, Georgia, June 22-26. Persons interested in attending this workshop should contact Annelle Ponder at the COFO office in Jackson. Transportation, room, and board will be provided.

NEWS STORIES

OUTLAW JACKSON DEMONSTRATIONS

A permanent injunction against civil rights demonstrations in Jackson has been issued by Chancellor Stokes B. Robertson, Jr., who took the action "to preserve the peace, tranquility, and general welfare of all the citizens of this municipality." He said that civil rights groups, in defending civil disobedience, "contend that the end justifies the means." Robertson also noted in his nine-page opinion that prominent people who spoke at mass meetings here last summer "aggressively urged the audience to vigorously assert their rights... and force the granting of alleged civil rights to Negroes."

Dave Dennis released the following statement to the press: "The injunction is a clear violation of the constitutionally protected rights of free speech and assembly. The Movement has always been by and of the people and for the betterment of the people and the injunction will not stop the people if they choose to demonstrate."

MOVE TO 'DROP' TOUGALOO

A Mississippi Senate committee has approved a bill which "would let the state accrediting commission drop Tougaloo," in the words of the bill's sponsor, Rep. Brad Dye of Grenada. At present this is impossible because Tougaloo is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The result of the bill, which seems likely to pass, would be that Tougaloo graduates would not be allowed to teach school in Mississippi.

PULITZER PRIZE FOR MRS. SMITH

Mrs. Hazel Brannon Smith, the courageous and liberal-minded editor of the Lexington Advertiser, has been awarded the Pulitzer prize for "steadfast adherence to her editorial duties in the face of great pressure and opposition." Mrs. Smith has stood against segregation, white Citizens Councils, and police brutality and has, as a result, been boycotted by local advertisers.

BROWN U. TO HELP TOUGALOO

Brown University, backed by generous grants from several foundations has undertaken an aid program for Tougaloo College. Brown President A.D. Keeney said the chief purpose of his university was to "provide certain staff and educational services that Tougaloo initially will be unable to provide for itself." The aid program includes plans to expand and strengthen Tougaloo's 32 man faculty through better pay, more manpower and advanced study, remedial programs for Tougaloo students, a fifth year program for Tougaloo students who need additional study before entering graduate or professional school, and general aid for



When you call me that--SMILE!!

scholarships and physical development of the college.

WASHINGTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE CLOSED

The Washington County courthouse has been closed to all political functions by local sheriff John Durham, ostensibly to protect valuable public records. It is felt that the real reason was fear that Negro Congressional candidates would use the building for a public rally. The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party is running one Negro candidate for the Senate and three for the House.

JACKSON GROUP AIMS TO OVERTURN INTEGRATION RULING

A Jackson group has sought a reversal to the 1954 Supreme Court ruling on school integration in opposition to a suit seeking integration of local schools. School Supt. Kirby Walker stated that he had kept the schools segregated for the good of both races. He summoned a series of academic people who stated that Negroes were better off in their own schools.

U.S. District Judge Sidney Mize has tentatively ordered school boards in Jackson, Leake County, and Biloxi to submit plans for integration by July 15. A hearing this past week was scheduled to determine if the order should stand.

KLAN LEADER SPEAKS

Robert M. Shelton, Imperial Wizard of the United Klans of America, spoke at McComb on May 16, before an audience of 800 people. He decried the use of violence and stated that Communists were using the civil rights movement as a tool for gaining power.

PETE STONER RELEASED

Pete Stoner, a COFO worker, was released from Forrest County jail May 21, after serving 107 days. Convicted of breach of the peace, resisting arrest, profanity, and contempt of court, he was also fined \$396. Pete had no lawyer, and after 40 days, he lost the right of appeal.

Attorney Len Holt secured \$346 from Mr. Luke Wilson of Bethesda, Md., and paid the fine in Pete's behalf (Pete had already worked off part of the fine by then.)

Pete spent the majority of his sentence working on a road gang. While in jail he was beaten severely by fellow prisoners, who were tipped off by police about Pete's civil rights activities. **MISSISSIPPIANS' INCOMES GROW FASTEST**

Mississippi's per capita income rose 7.9% between 1953 and 1963, the greatest increase of any of the conterminous states. However, the average yearly income for Mississippians, \$1379, is still far below the national average of \$2443.

NEW LAWS

STATE HIGHWAY PATROL EXPANDED: Governor Paul Johnson signed a bill increasing the Mississippi State Highway Patrol from 275 to 475 men and enabling the Governor to give the patrol police powers during racial emergencies. The patrol can now be sent into a community without the request or permission of the community. Previously, the patrol activities have been confined to traffic control. The cost of the expansion has been estimated at close to \$4 million. Johnson came out strongly against just such a state police force during his campaign. **ILLEGITIMACY BILL PASSED:** Governor Johnson signed a bill making it a misdemeanor to be the parent of two illegitimate children. The offence is punishable by a jail sentence of 30 to 90 days and/or a fine of \$250. Another provision states that a man cannot be convicted only on the testimony of the woman. Some observers have interpreted this as legalizing the rape of Negro women by white men.

The senate removed house provisions calling for sterilization as an alternative to a 5 year sentence, and making the crime a felony.

IN JAIL

C.O. Chinn is in the Madison County jail after his appeal failed regarding his charge of carrying a concealed weapon.

Milton Hancock is in the Hattiesburg jail on a charge of perjury.

Jimmy Jones is in the Hattiesburg jail on a charge of Rape. The woman involved reportedly wants to drop charges, but the city of Hattiesburg does not.

Mrs. Essis Lee Broom, who is pregnant, has been sent to the state penitentiary for a year, on a charge of violating a suspended sentence she received in 1962, two days after she attempted to register in Greenwood, when she was charged with "receiving money under false pretenses," in connection with her welfare checks. Att'y Ben Smith is handling the case. Ulysses Everett and Ben Hartsfield are still being held in Forrest County jail on picketing charges.

COMING EVENTS

- 27 May- Mrs. Gray will speak at Northside Baptist Church in Columbus.
- 28 May- Mrs. Gray will speak at Zion Gate Baptist Church in Columbus.
- 29 May- Big Madison County March to the county courthouse in Canton.
- 29 May- Regular mass meeting in Ruleville.
- 1 June- Ministerial Alliance and NAACP meeting in Gulfport. Mrs. Gray and Rev. Cameron will speak.
- 2 June- Election day-- VOTE!!!

NOTE

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Please, our material can come only from you! If you have any items, announcements, or articles, written or not, please send to Bill Light at the COFO office in Jackson.