

NEWSLETTER

No
3

MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM DEMOCRATIC PARTY.



April 24, 1965.

507½ Farish St,
Jackson, Miss.

M.F.D.P. ATTEMPTS TO PICKET SHERIFF CLARK.

Wed. April 21. - Eighteen people from Clarke and Lauderdale counties were illegally arrested and jailed by Jackson police yesterday, after they had set out to picket the Hotel Heidelberg, where Sheriff Jim Clark, of Selma, was scheduled to speak to a meeting of Mississippi Sheriffs.

The group intended to protest Sheriff Clark's presence in Jackson. No attempt was made to get a parade permit (since Constitutionally one was not needed), not were the police informed of the march.

(cont., p. 2)

- WASHINGTON CONFERENCE OPENS TODAY -

People from Mississippi - a bus and several car loads - are in Washington today (Saturday, April 24th) for a national conference called by the M.F.D.P.

Recent events made the conference imperative. There is, for example, the Voting Bill, which the Senate is about to consider, and the decision of Mississippi's Governor, Paul Johnson, to call

(cont. p. 2)

COMMENT

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The Clarion Ledger stated in an article by Mr. Charles Hill that a Constitutional amendment allowing sheriffs to succeed themselves in office, will be proposed to Mississippi Legislature at its next special or regular session. However, any amendment inserted into the Constitution will have to be approved by the people.

Negroes, are you people? If so, its time to wake-up, organize, and do something about this.

If this amendment is inserted into the Constitution, men like Sheriff Rainey and his deputy, Price, can stay in office indefinitely, and Negroes who can and will make good sheriffs, won't even get a ghost of a chance.

Until the Negro is given equal rights under the law, four years under these Sheriffs are ENOUGH.

SHERIFF JIM CLARK SPEAKS...

Sheriff Clark told Mississippi Sheriffs at their convention on Tuesday that civil rights workers had tried to make him feel like a 'villain'.

But this was only one of his minor charges. The Selma lawman who was responsible for thousands of arrests in the Alabama city, had his own interpretation of the events in Selma during the past few months.

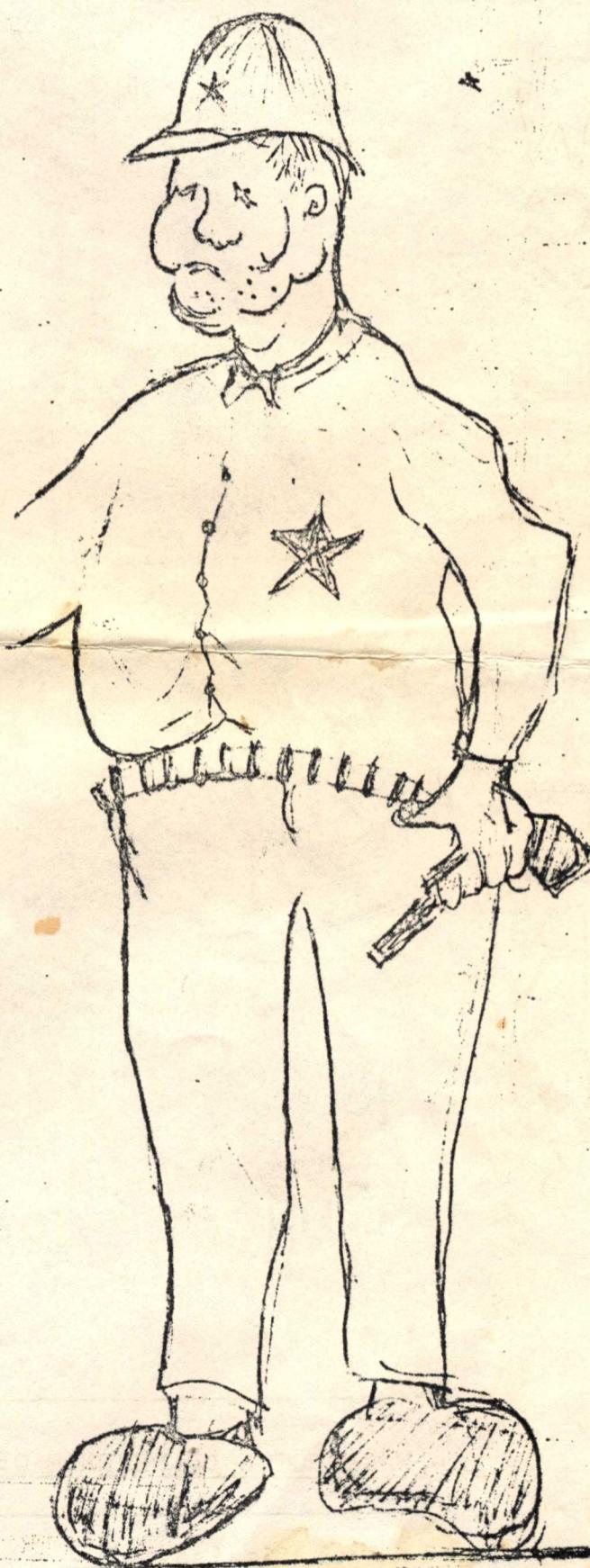
Clark spoke as if he believed the Negro had equal rights. In this way he was able to explain any demand for change as "agitation".

He used other ways, too, as a means to attack the Movement. Thus, Clark - without facts to back up his allegations - said that Communists had taken over the Selma to Montgomery march. He said that the demonstrations in Selma were "frought with immorality". Again without facts.

What Clark, did not, of course talk about, was the immorality of the system of life, of which he is a part, and a mainstay. Clark said nothing about using force against women and children. Clark didn't. He has still to learn the meaning of morality.

MISSISSIPPI'S

"NEW"
IMAGE ?



Jackson arrests (cont.)

The police apparently learned of the march from the F.B.I. - the Rev. J.L. Killingsworth, from Enterprise, Clarke county, spoke to two agents during the morning about the demonstration.

The marchers carried signs which they planned to unfold at the hotel, and which were, according to the Jackson Clarion Ledger critical pf Clark:

... As for example ... "Mississippi already has 82 skunks who needs Jim Clark?" ... "Make Jim an honorary Mississippi Sheriff - you deserve him" ... "Who is the outside agitator today?" ... Hail Jim Clark - he's a Gasser!

Clark, if he saw them at all, did so at the police. The group was arrested at the junction of Farish Street and Griffiths Street, after it had gone two blocks. The signs were taken away and the group was told they would have to turn round.

The Rev. Killingsworth responded by saying that they had a Constitutional right to march. He and six others sat down on the sidewalk.

Police then began to make arrests. One officer started to drag Mr. Killingsworth towards a paddy wagon, but he was called off by another officer. The "job" was done instead by Negro trustees.

All 18 were charged, the FDP learned later, with parading without a permit, and that the seven who sat down on the sidewalk were additionally charged with obstructing the sidewalk. Bond was set at \$100 - \$200 in cases where people had been charged with them.

Attempts are now being made to raise property bond, or cash bond, to get the people - 12 adults and 6 juveniles - out of jail. All are members of the FDP, or MSU.

Trial has been set for 4.00pm today (Wednesday), but it is our intention to ask for the hearing to be set for a later date, and in the meantime, file affidavits for all cases to be removed for a decision in Federal court.

WHAT DID SHERIFF CLARK SAY AT HIS MEETING ? see page 3.

Washington Conference (cont.)

a special session of the State Legislation, as soon as the probable shape of the Bill is known.

There are several questions which need to be looked at (and this the Conference will do) -- "is the Congressional Challenge - its outcome - going to be affected by President Johnson's Voting Bill" -- "does getting the vote necessarily mean that life will be better for Southern Negroes?" -- "Is the South likely to get 'free' elections this year?".

During the evening a copy of all evidence that was taken down during the deposition hearings in Mississippi, will be carried to the Clerk of the House of Representatives. This is part of the procedure of the Challenge - as laid down in the Federal Statute.

Apart from the FDP, the other organisations represented in Washington for the Conference include, the National Council of Churches, CORE (Watos Farmer is expected to speak), some Labor Unions, SNCC (Jim Foreman), Peace groups, the National Lawyers Guild, and the SCLC.

COMMENT

COMMENT

COMMENT (con't)

THE RIGHT OF PEOPLE TO MARCH AND PROTEST

Article 3, Bill of Rights, Section 11 says that the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government on any subject shall never be impaired. Then why is it unlawful for Negroes in Mississippi to air their grievances? Why are police compelled to arrest people who are assembled peaceably? Why was the Reverend Killingsworth and the group he led protesting Sheriff Jim Clark's presence in Jackson jailed? We don't need Clark in Mississippi. His ideas are stale. They failed in Alabama. So why should the people of Mississippi tolerate him?

NEWSHOME SHOT INTO

Mr. Dan Evans, a Negro resident of Rankin county--the same community where the Mt. Pisgahs Baptist Church was burned to the ground April 13--had his home shot into the next night at dusk.

George Raymond, Eustin Crawford, William Hamlet and Houston Howard, all COFO workers, kept watch over the house for a week. Mr. Howard and a group of COFO workers were also the first civilians to reach the burning church.

PIKE COUNTY FDP PLANS

The Pike county FDP plans a big meeting for April 25, to which the 650 signatories of the November Statement of Principles will be invited to discuss a number of topics with the FDP executive committee members. All 650 of the people who signed are white.

The Statement of Principles condemned racism, bombings, etc. and came out shortly after a wave of bombings in Pike county.

The meeting is to be held in the Sweet Home Church, a church in the Negro section of town.

KKK LEAFLETS IN GREENWOOD

KKK leaflets were found in the Negro section of town on Tuesday morning, April 6, in Greenwood, Mississippi. The leaflets criticized President (con't next col.)

NEWS

Johnson for attacking the Klan on the basis of one incident--the killing of Mrs. Liuzzo in Alabama. Many leaflets were found:

Mrs. Pinkie Pilcher was qualified by the city Democratic Party Executive Committee to seek an office in the city of Greenwood. Mrs. Pilcher was placed on the ballot as seeking the office of Post 2, street and sanitation commissioner. She is running against W. G. Mize, Jr.

Two other women, Mrs. Alice Blackwell and Miss Mary Lane, were disqualified because they were not registered voters.

Mrs. Blackwell had sought the office of Mayor and Miss Lane was seeking to run against Commissioner B. A. Hammond for the post of police and fire commissioner.

ANOTHER HOME SHOT INTO

The home of Mr. Robert Miles of Batesville, Mississippi, was shot into on Wednesday, April 14, at 11:30 P.M.

Guests in the home of Mr. Miles at the time of the shooting were Ponny, Elayne and Kathy Amatnick. The sheriff and highway patrol investigated. This is the first time they had bothered to look into an incident at the Miles' home.

YOUNG DEMOCRATS

Melvin Whitfield, a student at (con't, next page)

NEWS (con't)

at San Jose College in California and a native of Columbus, Mississippi, led a delegation of Young Democrats to Kansas City, Missouri, to a meeting of the National Committee of the Young Democratic Clubs of America that was held on April 9 and 10.

This was the second attempt by the group to obtain a charter for the group. Although they were again denied it, they will continue to press for the charter that they have a right to because they support the policy of the MFDP--the legal party of the state because it represents all of the people of the state.

An organizational meeting of the Hinds county Young Democrats is planned for Saturday, April 24, at Tougaloo College just outside of Jackson.

The Young Democrats are determined to be an organization independent of the regular state Democratic Party.

MFDP CANDIDATE IN MERIDIAN

Mrs. Crowell, a Meridian housewife, is trying to qualify as an independent to run for councilwoman from the 1st precinct.

MOSS POINT CANDIDATE

Dr. Saul Johnson, who filed for a candidacy in the Democratic primary at Moss Point, was disqualified on grounds that he is not a registered voter.

Mr. Johnson is with the FDP and says he does not want to file a suit.

GOVERNOR PAUL JOHNSON'S PLANS

Governor Paul Johnson plans to call a special legislative session before Congress completes action on President Johnson's voting rights bill which nullify Mississippi's registration.

(con't, page 7, JOHNSON)

NEWSALABAMA BOYCOT

The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., says the boycott of Alabama is in the first stage, that of discouraging industrial expansion in the state. Dr. King says the economic pressure program would not be pushed hard because of hopeful developments in the state.

SUNFLOWER COUNTY REGISTRATION

The MFDP county executive committee in Sunflower county met last week and decided on a crash voter registration program.

This is to take advantage of the Federal Court injunction recently which orders the Sunflower county registrar to register applicants on a non-discriminatory basis. The registrar must now give specific reasons for failing people and applicants do not have to interpret any parts of the state constitution. Age and residence and the ability to copy four lines of the constitution are the only requirements.

FDP will give "top priority" to Sunflower county. The executive committee will continue political workshops here in conjunction with the Congressional Challenge and the voting bill.

The executive committee will also file suit against state election officials to delay municipal elections "because people who should be registered haven't been able to." If the elections are not postponed, then those people must wait four years until the next election.

The MFDP has asked registrar Campbell of Sunflower county to hand over a list of people he has registered so it can be passed on to the city registrars for the county.

Ten extra workers have come into the county--four from Greenwood and six from Tuskegee Institute. Twenty workers from Washington, D.C. are expected.

By Wednesday of this week about 150 people had been registered. About 14 people have failed because they can't read or write. The goal is to register 3000 people this month.

THE MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM LABOR UNION AND THE FARM LABOR

CONFERENCE AT GREENVILLE.

The 18th annual Mississippi Farm Labor Planning conference, held in a Greenville motel on April 14th and 15th, was not billed as a public meeting. It was an invitation event, and hardly surprisingly, no Negroes were present when the Conference began on Wednesday morning.

According to a report published in the Jackson Clarion Ledger (April 15th) the conference was sponsored by the State Employment Service, the Delta Council, the State Extension Service, and the Bureau of Employment Security.

The Dept. of Labor was directly represented that day. However, Mr. H.A. Sanders, Delta Area Supervisor for the Employment Service, through whose office Federal money passes, was one of between 70 and 80 persons who sat down Wednesday to discuss Mississippi agriculture.

In Shaw, a small Delta town to the north-east, in Bolivar Co., the news of the conference was already common knowledge. To one organisation - only five days old -- and called the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union, it was of particular interest. The Union, the first of its kind in the State, was very different from those tolerated by Mississippi, and therefore ineffectual.

Unemployment did not give rise to it, although it is real enough threat to the Negro in the Delta. The basic issue was bad work and bad pay. Nothing illustrates the "bad pay" better than the plantation owners' threat to cut their payments this year to Negro cotton choppers from \$3 a day to \$1.75.

The application form which was drawn up to enroll members into the Union, may have seemed radical, but, in point of fact, some of the same demands were heard in the North 30 years ago.

Payment for overtime on the cotton plantations is unheard of -- the Union made that one of its demands: it called too, for a minimum hourly wage of \$1.25 from employers who pay # \$3 a day to sharecroppers and approximately \$15 to domestics.

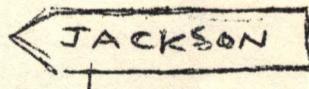
Traditionally no Negro goes on strike in the State, yet the application form explicitly referred to the need for strikes, collective bargaining, and boycotts "to make the people we work for meet our demands".

The Union's strength had grown to 300 to 350 by Tuesday, April 13th. It had spread in the meantime to Ruleville and Indianola, and to Winterville, one of three small towns on the Delta Pine and Land Plantation, the largest in the country, and owned not by a Mississippian, but by a cotton undertaking in Lancashire, England.

By Tuesday the decision had been taken to send people to the Farm Labor conference. Seventy went.

The reaction was fairly predictable. The police came and went, the delegates at the conference wondered how many of the Labor group they should let in, and finally arrived at the figure of eight. By this time the conferees were thinking of lunch and they said the "eight" should come in during the afternoon session. They did, while the remainder picketed outside.

PROGRESS - MISSISSIPPI STYLE



May 6th, Jackson : As we didn't get this issue of the Newsletter to the majority of people, we've mimeographed it again, and added this portion to it.

Postscript to Jackson arrests : (see story on page one)

Those people from Clarke, Lauderdale and Neshoba counties, arrested in Jackson on April 20th, were released from jail on bond two days later.

Something over \$2,000 in cash was raised, together with one property bond, to free the 18 people who were arrested by Jackson police when they marched downtown to protest against Sheriff Jim Clark speaking in Mississippi.

Their cases were transferred for a hearing in a Federal court.

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"GOOD NIGGER" ----- BY Susie Ruffin.

This is a phrase that burns a decent Negro up, because he knows what a White man means when he refers to a member of the black race in this way. It may be good to be "good" Negro for a White man, but it is one of the most dangerous things to be for the black race.

Our Governor said that the civil rights movement in Mississippi hasn't succeeded because we've got so many "good" Negroes in the State. If the statement is true he will be able to maintain that sweet Southern way of life that he frequently speaks of, and if this is accomplished it means that Negroes will still be assigned the menial jobs; and the Teacher who represents the State's Government, not their Race, will be called in to talk with the Governor and decide our future for us.

The officials of Jackson bragged recently about the good Negroes of the city, which was right after the youth was shot to death in Hinds Co. jail. The people prepared to protest but got an injunction restraining them from marching, so the "good Niggers" abided by the court order. Maybe if they had been a little naughty the Officials at the reformatory school will have thought twice before sending a 15 year old boy out on a lake as big as Lake Hico to work, and he would have been alive now. My heart is breaking about this, because I've known him all of his life.

The officials at Bogalusa (Louisiana) are bragging about their "good niggers", especially the Ministers. The Ministers have been the only leaders that the Negroes had and they its sacrelage to buck a Minister, so maybe the people in Bogalusa will just have to keep those menial jobs instead of getting any job they are capable of handling.

These "good Negroes" were on the scene in Slavery times. They were the House Niggers, who were treated good for a purpose. That was to have them spy on the outside workers and field Niggers who were in the majority. The good Niggers were the cause of so many of our ancestors being lynched and whipped. So don't be surprised if these good Negroes don't even decide to come into the M.F.D.P. and build up a party (political party) of their own. They are too "good" to offend their White people.

They are the breed that was crazy enough to believe in the 40 acres and a mule myth after the Civil War. They really believe that from here on out the National Democratic Party will do something for them, besides letting the regular Democrats of the State keep them without an effective vote.

(cont. over)

"GOOD NIGGER" (cont.)

So some of our Good Negro leaders are joining up with these people, and the results will be that their feet will still be on our necks. In fact I hope they won't be so good until they discourage integration in the schools which keep our children's learning on such a low level; they won't be able to acquire the jobs that the law says they are entitled to.

But keep raising the standards of eligibility so high so as only a few Southern Negroes are eligible for them.

.....May 5th, 1965.

POLL TAX EXEMPTION IN VOTING BILL - THEN OUT

Mississippi Senator, J. Stennis, is still lashing out at the Voting Rights Bill, condemning it as unconstitutional, and beyond the power of Congress to enact.

He also protested the tactics the Liberals are using to "rush" the measure through the legislature.

The section abolishing POLL TAX has been dropped. It was part of an amended Bill, now up for consideration by the Senate. Mr. Stennis expressed gratification that the authority leadership recognized the States' authority in this field.

Mr. Stennis concluded his two hour speech by saying: "This is a bad Bill".

Mrs. EULA BELL JOHNSON has been missing from several M.F.D.P. gatherings lately and upon enquiring about her, she was found to be ill. After talking with her, we feel that members of the Party have forgotten her. She is hoping that the Jackson office will mail her some literature so that she will know of recent plans and happenings. Her friends can write her at: 317, Noel Street, Greenwood, Mississippi.

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party's national conference was held in Washington D.C. on April 24th, 1965. About 45 people from Mississippi went. Supporters of the Party's challenge to the Mississippi Congressmen came from as far afield as New York and Los Angeles.

The opening address was by Mrs. Annie Devine, F.D.P. Congresswoman-elect for the 4th District. She stressed the fact that the Voting Bill now in the making, was a trick to keep people's minds off the Challenge. Stirring speeches were given by Mrs. Victoria Ann Gray, and Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer (FDP Congresswomen elect); also Mr. Lawrence Guyot, F.D.P. chairman, and others.

F.D.P. lawyers reported on what has happened up to now in the Challenge and what is expected to happen from here on out.

FDP MEMBER RECOVERS

Mrs. Sally Carthorn, a great FDP worker from Ruleville, and recently in Washington, is recuperating nicely at the Washington Workshop House, after undergoing major surgery twice in the last two months. The address is 1702, Kilbourne St N.W., Washington D.C. She will be glad to hear from friends in Mississippi.

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A LETTER TO M.F.D.P. MEMBERS.

Dear Members,

I have visited several meetings in the State recently. I find much enthusiasm among the people about the Congressional Challenge. But we must admit not enough emphasis is being placed on the Challenge. People speak about seeing the three candidates and Mr. Guyot on television. This is not the significant point, in fact this is entirely irrelevant.

People need to know that the Challenge is an effort by the MFDP to unseat five representatives from this State, who are responsible for the murders, reprisals and harassments that Negroes have endured during the office of four of the five Congressmen - which spreads over a period of thirty-four years. It is a fact that the denial of the right of Negroes to register and vote has been systematic, and that Negroes were kept away from the polls on election days.

During the period from 1961 through April 1965 many civil rights workers have come into the State, and worked in about half of the counties on voter registration, adult education classes, Federal programmes, freedom schools and community centers (some counties civil rights workers cannot work, even if they are Negroes). Any person, outsider or local, who has dared to engage in these activities has done so at the risk of his life, or loss of job and home.

The Highway Patrol, Sheriffs, and policemen lost no time in harassing, beating, burning, bombing and murdering people who tried to participate in, or even show sympathy, to the development of these programs.

There is no record of any State official, including the Mississippi Congressmen, of speaking out, demanding that brutality cease and upholding the right of people to assemble, organize, hold education classes, and participate in the political processes of the State. Instead these officials insist either there is no problem, or that the problem is so minute it does not need to be dealt with.

Jamie Whitten, Congressman from the 2nd District, in a statement to the Delta Council meeting held at Cleveland, Miss., May 4th, said : ' I am glad to say that in our area we are blessed by the fact that the overwhelming majority of our citizens know and respect each other. They are deeply interested in our State and its welfare... We are right in principle and we should never sacrifice our beliefs."

This is a demonstration of mental sickness of a political structure that has plunged the State to the bottom of the economic, social, and educational ladder of the whole country.

No wonder, Mr. Prentiss Walker, Republican Congressman, who is beginning his first term in Congress, made his first speech after his election to the Society for the Preservation of the White Race. No wonder the 4 Congressmen, Whitten, Colmer, Abernathy, and Williams, who have consistently voted against every civil rights bill from 1955 through 1964. Even now they are all fighting the passage of the voting bill. Their past voting record shows they have opposed federal aid to education, housing, minimum wage laws, and all other legislature that has direct implications for the Welfare of the masses.

People in our communities must become more aware of these basic issues in the Challenge. Indeed there can be no real honest CHANGE in this State until this political structure is crushed and replaced with a structure that works for all the people, because the electorate is representative of all the people, Black and White.

— Mrs. Annie Devine.

May 5th.

WORKSHOP

Mr. Frank Smith, the Director of the Washington Workshop, has asked me to recruit people to attend the workshop that is scheduled to start Monday, May 17th.

Negroes probably have more contact with the Dept. of Agriculture than any other agency, so people in the Workshop will be able to visit various offices of this Dept.

They will also be able to sit in on discussions of the Civil Rights Act, and Poverty Bill. Several Congressmen have agreed to let people serve in their offices for a day or two. This will enable people to understand more fully some of the things that go on behind the walls of big buildings of the Congress. The people will be transported to Washington by train or bus, and a place will be furnished for them to live while they are in Washington. Meals will also be provided.

You can contact me at 948-4038 in Jackson (please call collect I will be travelling over the State trying to see people in person.

Susie Ruffin.

VICTORY FOR BOND

One of the candidates winning a seat in the House of Representatives, Georgia, by a landslide, was a Negro, Julian Bond, whose home address is 823, Drummond St, N.W., Atlanta, in the 136th district.

Mr. Bond is 25 years old and attended Morehouse College for three years. He left school to help organize the Atlanta Inquirer, a weekly newspaper of the Atlanta Negro community. As a college student, Mr. Bond helped organize and was executive secretary of the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights

Mr. Bond joined the staff of the Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1962 as a staff member. He participated in voter registration and anti-segregation drives in South Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas.

He is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Horace Bond of Atlanta. His father is dean of education at Atlanta University. Mr. Bond is married and has two children.

He fought his campaign on a platform that included proposals for a minimum wage of \$2 an hour, better and more housing for poor, and regulations to safeguard those threatened with removal under clearance programs.

Clay County FDP begins two month registration drive.

Clay County FDP, together with the COFO project, has begun a two month "Get Out to Vote" campaign. 300 people came to a mass meeting in a West Point Church on May 5th to launch the drive.

This county where Negroes outnumber Whites, has only about 25 Negroes registered to vote. Mrs. Victoria Ann Gray, FDP Congresswoman for the 5th District, spoke at the meeting, along with the Rev. Lindsay of West Point, and John Buffington, who heads the COFO project.

The 2 month campaign will be run principally by the precincts, and in fact they will be competing against each other for the highest number of people registered. A trophy will go to the winning precinct.

In support of the campaign, the MSU plans a march through West Point on the 18th of this month.

SUNFLOWER COUNTY - MORE REGISTERED VOTERS.

Something like 600 Negroes are now registered to vote in Sunflower County since the Justice Dept, suit against Campbell, the Registrar.

The injunction against Campbell resulted in the dropping of the interpretation sections from the voter registration test.

That was on the 19th of April. Since then the County FDP has gone all out to get people to the courthouse to register to vote.