

STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COTTON WORKERS
FORM LABOR UNION

GREENVILLE, MISS.- Over 60 members of the newly formed Mississippi Freedom Labor Union (MFLU) picketed a U.S. Department of Labor sponsored meeting here.

The union organized less than a week ago has over 500 members in six counties.

The meeting, also sponsored by a number of state agencies and the Mississippi Delta Council, an owners group, dealt with farm labor in the Delta.

The picketers protested the fact that no Negroes were invited to speak or participate in the conference. An organizer for the MFLU explained, "The conference dealt with the fate of thousands of Negroes and none of us were invited to participate."

Members of the Freedom Labor Union, formed April 9, 1965, have signed pledge forms calling for- a \$1.25 minimum wage; an eight hour day with time and a half for overtime; children under 16 and people over 60 not having to work; sick leave and free medical care; full compensation from the government for those who can not get jobs; health and accident insurance; and equal employment practices in wages, hiring and working conditions.

Union members have pledged to use all forms of direct action including "strikes, picketing and boycotts," to win their demands.

The union was formed in Shaw, Miss. when 45 workers signed the pledge forms. "The idea for the union came out of a Freedom School Meeting," said George Shelton a resident of Shaw and organizer for the MFLU. "We felt that we should be getting a fair price for what we were working for," he added.

Shelton explained that, people down here get \$1.75 a day for chopping cotton for a ten hour day."

"Ten members of our union have gone on strike," Shelton said .
"They will only work for \$1.25 an hour."

The Mississippi union has orgaized workers in Bolivar, Sunflower, Washington, Issaquena, Sharkey and Holmes Counties. "We have been contacted by interested parties in a number of counties in the Delta," said Robert Weil a worker for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.