

THE STUDENT VOICE

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SNCC Conference Votes:

'People's Conferences' Will Decide Program

ATLANTA, GEORGIA - The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) will place major emphasis in 1965 on organizing "People's Conferences" and support of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP).

These decisions, and others, were made at a seven-day meeting of SNCC's Coordinating Committee in Atlanta February 12 - 19. The meeting also decided:

- to encourage "People's Conferences" in Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas and Georgia. Local people assembled at these conferences would decide on programs they wanted implemented in their areas. The four state conferences would lead to a larger meeting bringing together people from across the South to a "Let The People Speak" conference.

- to mobilize 2,000 students as a "Washington Lobby" in the nation's capitol. Members of the "Lobby" may engage in non-violent direct action to support the MFDP's challenge and to demand "Free Elections In Mississippi."

The MFDP, at a February 21 meeting in Jackson, voted on a COFO-style summer project involving summer volunteers. MFDP county chairmen will orient incoming volunteers once they arrive in the counties where local FDP chapters have requested them.

Members of the SNCC Arkansas staff are planning a late May state-wide meeting of local people to discuss future projects.

SNCC staffers in Alabama plan to move into other black belt counties surrounding Selma.

SNCC workers in Cambridge, Maryland hope to expand their work throughout the state's Eastern Shore, using some college volunteers.

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SNCC WORKERS EXPAND INTO ALA. BLACK BELT



SELMA STUDENTS MARCH to protest police oppression and discriminatory registration. "High school kids and students from Selma University were a mainstay of the past few weeks drive" SNCC Chairman John Lewis said. During one demonstration, every Negro public school teacher in Selma left school to march downtown.

Move Into Five

Rural Counties

SELMA, ALA. -- Workers for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) have begun voter registration organization in five counties surrounding Selma.

SNCC Chairman John Lewis spoke at the first registration mass meeting ever held in Coy in nearby Wilcox County where there are no registered Negro voters. Negroes comprise 78% of the county's population.

George Bess, a SNCC worker, has been organizing in Marion in Perry County for eight weeks. It was here that Jimmy Lee Jackson was shot and killed after Alabama State Troopers and white bystanders beat and clubbed Negro marchers and newsmen. Jackson was buried in a hero's funeral March 3.

Registration workers have also moved into Hale and Lowndes Counties.

A Negro minister, Rev. L. H. Harrison, was ordered out of Gordonville in Wilcox County by shot-gun-carrying white men. The whites came to Mount Carmel Baptist Church on February 28 and told a deacon that if Harrison "didn't get out of the county by sundown" he "wouldn't be found."

SNCC worker Bess reports a Marion church received a bomb threat and that he expects "More beatings, firings and shootings" as the drive continues.

SNCC Alabama Project Director Silas Norman, who was recently named to direct SNCC activities across Central Alabama, reports that veteran Mississippi SNCC workers and two-way-radio cars are expected to enter the 19-county black belt soon.

SNCC began working in central Alabama in February

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Boycott Succeeds In Moultrie

MOULTRIE, GA. - Over 600 Negro students have finally returned to their high school after a three week boycott.

The students returned to William Bryant School when the local school board agreed to their demands.

Successful school boycotts are also being conducted in Indianola, Moss Point, Magnolia and Issaquena--Sharkey Counties in Mississippi. An effective boycott in Selma and Marion, Alabama aided the vote drive there, and included a one-day teachers' strike demanding easier registration hours.

In Thomasville, Georgia, Federal District Judge J. Robert Elliot concluded a hearing on a request by Negro parents from Moultrie to close down Bryant High and to integrate their



Boycotting Moultrie Students

children --and other pupils at Bryant--into all-white Moultrie High School.

Mrs. Catherine Hunt testified at the hearing that the school is "dangerous to the life and health of my child." She said that she had asked her child be transferred to the white school but was refused.

Another Negro parent told the court that he had sent two of his daughters to schools in Atlanta because for the poor facilities.

Nearly 400 people were arrested during the boycott that began in Moultrie February 3. Students began a

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MFDP Completes Taking Testimony

JACKSON, MISS. -- Part two of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) Congressional Challenge was completed here Feb. 14. The state of Miss. now has 40 days to take rebuttal testimonies.

Over 100 lawyers from around the country took depositions from residents of 30 counties throughout the state for the MFDP.

The MFDP first challenged the Congressmen when the House convened on Jan. 4. At that time a resolution depriving them of their seats was defeated 276 to 148.

Feb. 14 terminated the

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Indictment Halted By Federal Judge

MERIDIAN, MISS. -- A federal judge who has seen 98% of his civil rights decisions reversed and who called Negro voting applicants "a bunch of niggers" has dismissed felony indictments against 17 men accused of slaying three civil rights workers last summer.

United States District Judge Harold Cox said the indictments did not contain a "crime against the United States" and therefore was not in his court's jurisdiction. Although the federal statute under which the 17 were charged states that it is a crime for two or more people to "conspire to deprive or intimidate any person in the employment of his constitutional rights", Cox ruled that murder was not a federal crime and therefore the section did not apply.

Cox, a college roommate of Senator James Eastland and former campaign manager for the racist senator, was the first Kennedy nominee named to the federal bench.

In March, 1964, he gave his views on Negro registration in his home state. He said "I'm not interested in whether the registrar is going to give a registration test to a bunch of niggers on a vote drive."

Law groups - and civil rights workers - have criticized the judge for his slowness in handling civil rights cases. He has also been

called "hopelessly prejudiced where race is an issue!" Cox often sends cases back to state courts, causing long and expensive delays.

In the past few years, Cox has attempted to disbar one of the three Negro lawyers in Mississippi, refused a COFO request to integrate the state coliseum, and refused many requests to remove sit-in and other civil rights cases to federal court and reduce the bond.

A second federal indictment against the accused killers was not mentioned in the ruling. The indictment, under Section 242, Title 18, makes it a misdemeanor to deprive any other person of their constitutional rights "under color of law."

The Justice Department has not commented on the recent ruling. The department recently clashed with Cox when it blocked some perjury indictments against civil rights workers. The judge attempted to hold members of the department staff in contempt of court.



THE ASHES OF THE LAUREL, MISSISSIPPI Freedom House revealed that whoever set the fire had first destroyed office equipment inside. Voter registration activity there is still continuing.

MISSISSIPPI NEWS ROUNDUP

MAGNOLIA, MISS. - Students from three Pike County high schools are leading and organizing demonstrations here against discriminatory registration procedures.

The protests, which began on February 24, have been aimed toward securing Negro representation on a review board to check registrar Glen Fortenberry; the elimination of the literacy test here; and the establishment of mobile registration unit for the Negro community.

During previous demonstrations, students and adults marched through downtown Magnolia to the courthouse, where they asked to see Registrar Fortenberry.

On March 1, nearly the entire COFO staff and some local adults were served with an injunction prohibiting them from demonstrating at the courthouse.

That same afternoon, 35 students and 11 staff members were jailed at the County Courthouse. The jailed students were released that afternoon.

Although there are nearly 7000 eligible Negroes in Pike County, fewer than 300 are registered voters.

SNCC began its first registration drive here in 1961.

In other recent Mississippi news:

A shot was fired on February 28 into the home of

Robert Miles, an active FDP member in Batesville. Miles houses COFO workers. One, SNCC worker Penny Patch, was narrowly missed by the bullet.

In Belzoni, 70 members of the Mississippi Student Union attended the previously segregated Kress Theatre on February 28. While they were there, however, no white people were allowed to enter and when they returned later that evening, the theatre was closed.

In Benton County, local residents integrated two Ashland, Mississippi, cafes.

A Valley View, Mississippi school boycott was continuing as the VOICE went to press.

In Canton, 24-year-old Willie Henry Lee of Goshen Springs was found dead on February 25. His car, identical to one driven by a COFO staffer, was found the next day in Jackson.

Nine people were jailed in Indianola on February 25, apparently because of their connection with a school boycott in progress there.

St. Joseph Church in Holly Springs was burned to the ground on February 20. Voter registration classes had been held there.

During the second demonstration in Batesville's history, three people were beaten while police stood by. The demonstration,

held on February 26, was to protest illegal arrests and closed trials of 10 students and 2 staff members arrested in earlier action.

A movie theatre and cafe were integrated in Ruleville on February 22. A cross burning followed public accommodations testing there on February 19.

SNCC staffer John Harris was beaten, Charles Scattergood injured and 53 jailed during picketing of the all-white public library in Indianola on February 19.

In Meridian, 15 local people and several COFO staffers were jailed when they tried to picket a luncheon featuring FBI agent Roy K. Moore in a segregated hotel on February 16. When Mrs. Fannie Lee Chaney, mother of murdered rights worker James Cheney, tried to enter, she was told "I ought to knock your goddamn black head off!"

In Greenwood, Milton Hancock, the Reverend L. Given and Jake McGhee were refused entrance to the Ervin Hotel in February 16.

In Canton, FDP lawyers and COFO staff members integrated the washroom at the Madison County Courthouse on February 10 during FDP hearings.

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SELMA

Selma Strife Splits Whites

SELMA, ALA. - The handling of Negro demonstrations has opened a small split among white leaders here.

The split is most openly seen between County Sheriff Jim Clark and City Safety Director Wilson Baker. The most visible issue is how to handle mass marches and other forms of direct action.

The split is between what one worker calls "smart and stupid segregationists." Baker and his supporters are the "smart" ones; Clark the reverse.

Whites here have expressed the feeling that Clark and other rabid segregationists are riding what is called the "Wallace tide." When Wallace ran for governor in 1958 he was considered the most liberal candidate. The governor soon learned that race-baiting was the way to win and now politically minded whites are following his lead. A white woman explained that "Clark and a few of the White Citizens Council crowd have political ambitions."

Local whites feel that the city has been hurt in two ways; merchants downtown have begun to feel the pinch of empty stores and businessmen fear that the city's image will retard new industry.

Both whites and Negroes have been avoiding the downtown area; whites, because they are afraid of the disruptions and Negroes who have not been involved in demonstrations because they are afraid they will be considered part of one and be arrested.

Secondly, the city's and state's images, which have much to do with attracting industry, is being tarnished.

One white business man said, "We are sick about what has happened in the last few days."

On the other hand, Baker has taken a "smarter" attitude toward maintaining the status quo. In January, when Clark asked Wallace to send in state troopers, Baker wired him the opposite. No state troopers came then.

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BLACK BELT-- An Overview

ATLANTA, GA. - The Deep South Black Belt is one of the poorest areas in country. It is also the area where the least amount of Negroes are registered.

SNCC has recently announced that it will expand its operation in the Black Belt area that includes counties in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia and Mississippi.

The statistical table shows that while only 17.4% of the total population resides in the Black Belt,

34.4% of the Negro population lives there. And over 85% of the Negro families in the Black Belt make less than \$3,000 a year.

In the State of Mississippi over half the Negro population lives in the Black Belt but only 3.66% of them are registered. While in Alabama a little over a quarter of the Negro population lives in the Black Belt with only 5.19% registered.

The largest county in the four state Black Belt is

Washington County, Miss., with a population of over 78,000. The second largest county is Dallas County, Ala., with a population of 56,667. Negroes make up 57.7% of the population, but less than 2% are registered.

The poorest county for Negroes is Issaquena, Miss., where 98% of the Negro population makes less than \$3,000 a year. Another poor county is Lincoln County, Ark., where 93.6% of the Negroes make less than \$3,000 a year.

BLACK BELT: Deep South (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia and Mississippi) Source: U. S. Census-1960 A Black Belt County is designated as one that has a Negro population above 44.9% of the total population

	State Pop. Total In-300	Pop. B. B. Counties In-100	% Of Total	State Total Negro Pop. In-300	Negro B. B. Count. In-100	% Of Total
Total	11,205	1,955	17.4	3,406	1,172	34.4
Ala.	3,276	308	11.9	980	263	26.8
Ark.	1,789	228	12.7	389	126	32.4
Ga.	3,956	463	11.7	1,122	254	22.6
Miss.	2,184	875	40.0	915	529	57.7

NEGRO FAMILIES IN THE BLACK BELT

	#	#Making Less Than \$3,000/ year	%Making Less Than \$3,000/ year
Total	223,444	192,136	85.9
Ala.	49,983	41,975	84.0
Ark.	24,491	21,761	88.8
Ga.	48,134	40,075	83.2
Miss.	100,836	88,325	87.6

	Negro Voting Age Pop. B. B. Count. In-300	BB Negro Registered	%
Total	545	N. A.	No
Ala.	120	6,236	5.19%
Ark.	60	15,341	25.7%
Ga.	128	N. A.	No
Miss.	237	8,674	3.66%

Selma ..

Continued from Page 1 ary, 1963. Since Dr. Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference entered the drive in January, 1965, national attention has focussed on the state.

On March 1, SNCC Chairman Lewis and other workers canvassed in Wilcox and Lowndes Counties. Over 350 Wilcox County Negroes tried to register to vote. In Lowndes County, SNCC workers talked with the Sheriff and a member of the board of registrars who said SNCC workers "were there to stir up trouble," and that some of their best friends were Negroes.

To date, more than 3,500 people have been jailed in Selma and Marion in vote attempts, integration tries and marches. Thousands have waited in lines at the Dallas County Courthouse in Selma but fewer than 200 have managed to take Alabama's difficult voter test.

(For more information on Central Alabama, see SNCC publications: SELMA; THE BLACK BELT and JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY IN DALLAS COUNTY.)

A boycott of Selma's merchants is already being felt here. One milk distributor threatened to "close down" a Negro's store if the storeowner refused to take his milk.

Tuskegee Site Of Alabama Meet

TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE, ALA. - A state-wide conference of college students will be held here during the second week in March, SNCC's campus travelers announced this week.

College students from across Alabama will gather here to discuss working in civil rights on their college campuses and in their home state during the summer.

ZINN BOOK AVAILABLE

SNCC: THE NEW ABOLITIONISTS by Dr. Howard Zinn, published by Beacon Press, outlines the history of SNCC and is available from SNCC, 6 Raymond Street, NW, Atlanta, for \$4.95.

Moultrie

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sit-in in the schools that day and later walked out, demanding the school be brought up to accredited status, which it lost two years ago.

The Moultrie Board of Education promised that the Bryant High School would be accredited by April, 1965 and that this years class would graduate from an accredited school.

To reach accreditation the school board has promised to purchase 157 new desks; buy new library books to meet requirements; have the school grounds paved; improve the heating; replace broken window panes; paint and maintain sub-standard rooms; and buy additional science equipment. The board also promised no reprisals for boycotting students.

Bryant High school lost its accreditation because of overcrowded class rooms and too few teachers. White Moultrie High Schools could also lose its accreditation if the school board doesn't raise some money. School Supt. Ray Bryant announced that the board is "going to wind up \$100,000 in debt," this year.

During the protest, the board of education threatened to have the children and parents arrested under the state compulsory education law.

Workers for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) set up



THE LAUREL, MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM HOUSE, partially destroyed by fire on February 17. Three rooms were almost completely destroyed, a mimeograph machine was smashed, records were burned and an extensive library was ruined. The fire was the third attempt to destroy property belonging to Laurel citizen Cleveland Golden, who had rented the building to COFO since November, 1964. On Christmas Eve, a restaurant he owned was burned and in January, a hotel he owned was set on fire. SNCC project Director Gwen Robinson said "He was the only person in town who would rent to us. After the fire, I don't know where we'll go."

"Freedom Schools" for the absent pupils.

SNCC worker Hermon Kitchens emphasized that the students had planned and organized the protest. He explained that "the kids spontaneously started a sit-in in the halls".

During the three weeks, the boycott was never less than 90% effective.

SNCC has been working in Southwest Georgia since Sept. 1961. Workers have been in Moultrie permanently since last summer when they helped organized the area for the congressional campaigning of Negro candidate C. B. King.

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MFDPP

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forty days in which MFDPP lawyers could take depositions. Under Title 2, Chapter 7, of the U.S. Code persons can be subpoenaed to give testimony about the conduct of the Congressional Elections.

From Atlanta, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) announced as many as 2,000 students may come to Washington, D.C. to demand Free Elections in Mississippi. The 2,000 students will form a "Washington Lobby" and may engage in nonviolent direct action to support the MFDPP's Challenge.

At hearings here, Attorney General Joe Patterson admitted that the state does not investigate charges by Negroes of the denial of the right to vote.

Richard Morphew, a White Citizens' Council Leader, admitted that his group received money from a state agency. Morphew stated that the Council received money from the State Sovereignty Commission which derives its funds from public taxes.

In Magnolia in Pike County, E. W. Steptoe related events surrounding the 1951 death of Herbert Lee and the 1964 murder of Louis Allen. Steptoe said Allen, who testified Lee was killed in self defense by a white politician, later admitted he had lied because he feared for his life. After other threats against him, Allen himself was shot by persons unknown in February, 1964.

The hearings ended with testimony from former Governor Ross Barnett taking the stand in Jackson. Barnett said he was "mighty proud" to be a member of the White Citizens Council but continually refused to answer most other questions.

FDP activity is continuing all over the state. In McComb, the local FDP has selected two of its members as candidates in a special "Freedom Election" scheduled for April 5. The two, Mr. J. L. Martin, candidate for selectman-at-large, and Mr. Willer Dodd, candidate for Ward 3 selectman, will engage in a month's hard campaigning "to involve more McComb Negroes in their role as potential decision makers in their community and state." In addition, J. L. Martin has filed as a candidate for the city election and was nominated by 64 registered Negro voters. 25 of his nominating names have been disqualified, however.

SNCC Chairman Calls For Funds

ATLANTA, GA. -- "We must have additional resources if we are to expand into other black belt areas of the deep South," SNCC Chairman John Lewis said.

Lewis said the SNCC badly needed cars, office

Whites -- from Page 3

The chance for any group of whites speaking out against Clark is increasing, but is still very slim.

As one white man put it, "The trouble is, too many of our people fear the white man more than they do the Negro and won't speak up against Clark."

machinery and operating funds to continue its work.

Conference

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In Southwest Georgia, SNCC workers expect the thrust of the Moultrie boycott (see separate story) will carry over into other communities, and their organizing efforts will be coupled with similar boycotts in other Southwest Georgia areas.