

# 78

WATS REPORT

Sunday, May 16, 1965

RANKIN CO. MISS. via Jackson

Martha Wright was arrested about 4:30 in Brandon for no brake lights. She will plead guilty at trial Monday, and plans to stay in jail instead of paying \$50 fine.

Monday, May 17, 1965

COLUMBUS, MISS.

FIRE-BOMBING OF FREEDOM HOUSE

The Freedom House here was fire-bombed at about 2:30 am Monday morn. Someone had set a tin can filled with paper, wood, and gasoline outside the back door. The fire was almost immediately put out, and only one of the rooms in the building was damaged. After the fire was put out, a blue '55 Ford drove by the house several times. The license number was taken down and given to the police. The FBI was also notified. The local police investigated the fire shortly after it occurred and also later this morning. They said that the fire was probably started by a faulty electric wire on the refrigerator. (The electricity has been off in the house for the past three days.)

WASHINGTON FDP Jan Goodman/Bab 5:45 pm DEPOSITIONS PRESENTED TO CLERK OF HOUSE--QUESTION ABOUT HOW MUCH OF "EVIDENCE" WILL BE

MADE PUBLIC Today this Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party submitted more than 600 depositions (testimony taken from witnesses out of court) to Congress at a press conference here. Present at the event, in addition to Lawrence Guyot and Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer of the FDP, were James Farmer of CORE and John Lewis of SNCC. Farmer announced the whole-hearted support of CORE for the Challenge, and said that unless Congress took some action to unseat the regular Mississippi delegation, CORE and other civil rights groups would sponsor massive demonstrations throughout the country. John Lewis talked about the June Student Lobby, and discussed the meaning of the Challenge in terms of people being able to govern their own lives. A statement from Martin Luther King (SCLC) was also read, which reaffirmed his support, and called upon all the American people to support the Challenge.

The depositions submitted support the MFDP charges of violence, murder, harassment, economic intimidation of Negroes attempting to take part in political activities in the state of Mississippi. Included is conclusive evidence of officially perpetrated violence and harassment, and the admission of state officials of their own participation in organized racism, and illustrations of the close ties ~~between organizations such as the~~ between organizations such as the White Citizens Council and the state administration in depriving Negroes of the right to vote.

Now the depositions are before the Clerk of the House. There is some question as to how much of the testimony will be printed up and made public. The FDP is demanding that all the evidence be made available to all the Congressmen.

via Jackson, 8:00pm Mike Higson/Bab VIOLENCE IN THE FIFTH

Six buildings were burned over the weekend in Jasper, Jones, and Covington Counties. All but one of them was connected in some way with the Movement. In Heidelberg (Jasper Co) a Negro community center was burned to the ground. NCOFO has just begun working in Jasper Co. A charred notebook containing the name Imperial and some phone numbers more

was found in the debris. An unoccupied house was burned last night in Laurel (Jones Co). It is thought that this fire was a decoy to keep firemen busy so they would be unable to put out any others.

Telegrams have been sent to John Doar, Philip Hart of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Emanuel Celler of the House Judiciary Committee, and Lee White, Presidential Assistant, expressing outrage at this outbreak of violence and asking federal action to prevent its recurrence, demanding "no bland formulas and excuses."

SELMA, ALA. Harriet Tansman/Bab 9:15 pm-  
Out of the 47 people arrested Saturday (See WATS # 77), some of the students had hearings today. Seven of them were rearrested in the courtroom by the judge. Two SCLC workers going into the courtroom with the students were also arrested.

250 people went to the courthouse today. About 200 of them were actually tested; several more received numbers to come back to be tested. There was no police harassment.

A suit against Jim Clark by the Inc Fund, charging him with contempt of a federal court order prohibiting harassment of vote registration was continued.

A Unitarian minister, part of the Unitarian Church's Committee for Social Justice's project in Alabama, has offered Jimmie Lee Jackson's sister a full scholarship to college or nursing school.

LIVINGSTON, SUMTER CO. 40x people were registered today.

PHILADELPHIA, MISS. via Jackson, 10:30pm  
Richard Tinsley, PD here, was charged with assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill. Bond is \$10,000. LCDC is working on the case. The victim is still in critical condition.

JACKSON, MISS. Jan Hillegas/Bab 10:30pm COFO WORKERS HARRASSED AT  
WHITE CITIZENS COUNCIL AFFAIR Governor George Wallace spoke tonight at a "White Monday" annual rally at the Coliseum sponsored by the Citizens Council. Jan, Phil Lapsansky, and Inc Fund lawyer Tom Galglish (all white) attended. After a while, they looked behind them and saw a sign propped up behind them, with fake names that Jan and Phil had given recently at an APWR meeting, the address they gave, and the words "Freedom House." Then a group of white men sat behind them, sprinkled hot ashes on them, and made remarks about the "stink in the room." After a while, the COFO workers left. In the hall, they were followed, and both Tom and Phil were bumped and punched several times by people following them.

ALBANY, GEORGIA Jim Parry/Bab 11:15pm  
Sherrod is back.

Also, DON'T ANYBODY EVER AGAIN CALL C.B.KING COLLECT.

CORDELE, via Albany, Fred Anderson/Bab

At a meeting of the Cordele City Commission held April 20, Fred, Rev. Fullwood, and Deacon James Burch presented a list of grievances, including paving roads, giving Negro policemen full authority, desegregating the hospital, signing a school compliance pledge, etc. At the next meeting of the Commission, a group of Negro citizens known as the City "athers" (SNCC calls them the "City Toms") attended and spoke in opposition to the Commission doing anything about the grievances. Their reasons were: that the demands were made by the Crisp Co. Movement, which is mostly high school students; also, that all these grievances imply that the present form of government, which is the

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is inadequate.

City Manager form of government. There is an election coming up in which people will decide between the City Manager form and the Mayor form, and in general, the Negro community favors the City Mgr form. As a result of the opposition of the "City Fathers", the City Commission has lost interest in doing anything about the grievances. The Movement plans direct action before the next meeting of the Commission, to point up the urgency of getting the demands filled.

SYRACUSE, NY Joffre Clarke/Bab 11:45 pm

There are still 17 Alabamians in Syracuse. Tonight they took part in a vigil-demonstration aimed at discrimination by the Niagara-Mohawk Power Co. Two Alabamians and two New Yorkers were arrested.

During the past few days, people from Alabama have been canvassing in the community to learn about the problems of the ghetto in the Northern city.

EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN Karen Brantley/Bab Midnight

Negro students and faculty members at Michigan State U here have long had difficulty in obtaining homes or apartments. Michigan has a law against discrimination in housing. For 3 or 4 years, protests have been made about the situation, but nothing has been done. Tonight 60 students, organized by Friends of SNCC here are lying-in at City Hall here in protest. They want help.

For further information, call Karen, 517-332-5771, or Ben Taylor, 517-332-8990. Send telegrams to Governor George Romney (who incidentally lives in East Lansing).

#### Announcements:

At the staff meeting at Waveland, there was a lot of comment about the WATS reports. People said they were sick of incidents of violence, and wanted to read about the positive programs going on around the country. We will try in the future to get and send out this kind of information. (This means you, too.) In about a week, we will have moved to the new office, and we will have two WATS lines set up--one for the North and one for the South. This will make it easier for us to maintain a great deal of contact with the field. We will try to call each project at least twice or three times a week, and will try to get at least a weekly detailed program report from each project.

Of course, we need your help to improve communication. For example, let us know if we have your correct address, if you receive regular WATS reports, staff mailings, and Student Voices. (Just in case a project isn't on our mailing list, why not spread the word to nearby projects that they should be hearing from us, and should let us know if they aren't.)

Let Jeanne Breaker or Barbara Brandt know how we can have improved communication with the field:

phone: 404-688-0331

address: SNCC  
360 Nelson St. SW  
Atlanta, Georgia