

Miss file

March 11, 1964

Greetings,

The Movement here is in something of a slump. There are small things going on every other day or so, but nothing new. We need a new project or something to revitalize things. People are looking to the summer and school integration in the fall, and the period in between is sort of holding ground until.

Also, attendance at meetings is falling off. A lot of "regulars" are involved in play practice and several others have evening classes. There are a lot more evening classes this semester than usual. This unavoidable drop in attendance may have a lot to do with the "slump." So far we have the questions, but not the answers.

One thing which is putting in some new blood is the Joan Baez performance. This is being sponsored by an Inter-Collegiate Council of students from Tougaloo, Millsaps, and Mississippi College. The performance is on April 5th. This is a bad day because it is the last day of our Spring Break. A lot of students should be back on campus then anyway, but it will hurt. It was the only date we could get. Also, it costs. Most things on campus are 15% stag and 25% drag--and this is \$1 advance tickets and \$1.50 at the door for students. It will take some talking to sell. However, tickets are going. The kids at Millsaps and Mississippi College are getting a better response than they had expected. We are trying to bring in new kids with the ticket selling on campus. A table is set up during lunch. The sororities will help man it, and also kids who aren't particularly identified with the Movement. We are having a little trouble with the Administration--particularly Mr. Owens, the Business Manager. He is very middle class and has not been very sympathetic to students "getting out of place." We had a hard time securing the guest room, because the school wasn't sponsoring the event. (The school had approved the event when it gave us a date and place to have it. This he overlooked.) Also, he has made us take down some of our posters. We shall overcome. This is just part of an anti-Movement move on the part of much of the Administration.

The Movement is reaching more students in an active sense--though somewhat vicariously. The campus Movement publication and the Student Voice (SNOC) go much faster than they used to, and in larger numbers. Students even ask when the next one is coming. And you hear some discussion of things in the papers. Generally, the campus is becoming more politically "aware" (e.g., student workers are demanding higher wages and talking of a strike) and this helps the Movement. They sort of act on each other.

People coming to town in April are: Sammie Kay, Brigit Nilsonp Holiday on Ice, and Paul Harvey. If anybody can apply any pressure to cause any of these to cancel, it would be appreciated. We're in contact with all of them.

As I said last time, Gary Graffman cancelled his appearance before the Concert Series (the big thing in town--where everyone needs to be "seen."). He was replaced, after some desperate efforts, by a German pianist. The man was "fresh off the boat," spoke very little English, and from what we hear from New York didn't understand the situation at all. We forgive him. The announcement that a replacement had been secured was not made until the day of the concert. The local radio and TV kept announcing that a replacement had been secured but did not mention name, sex, or talent. (We wonder why?) The box office would divulge sex only. Later in the afternoon they wouldn't answer the phone. The event was rather poorly attended. We sent down two Negro students (used a total of 5 people for observers, drivers, etc.) with valid tickets. They were to try to avoid arrest, and did. They also had some real good conversations with police and employees--and they came out ahead. But they didn't get in. This was on February 27th.

The Mayor is really losing his mind. This is not just our prejudice. A reporter from New York who was on campus and had just interviewed him said the same thing. Also a cousin of his (a girl at Millsaps who is working with us on the church visits) says so. He says many things, and I can't remember them all. Two of the recent ones. Yesterday he announced a vote on a bond issue which includes an expansion of the jail. He already has power to ship people up to Parchman (new bill) so this seems strange--particularly since he hasn't had very good luck on bond issues. Also, he really went way off base in attacking the Chamber of Commerce. The Mayor spoke before a Senate Sub-Committee on the Civil Rights Bill. Then he made a speech before the Chamber of Commerce when he got back, telling what he thought of the bill. Then he asked the Chamber to send copies of the bill to all its members and to write letters to Senators. (Correction, that speech may have been before someone else.) Anyway, the Chamber didn't mail out his speech so he held forth against the Chamber, saying it didn't support his position on Civil Rights and that the City Commissioners should go on record saying that the Chamber was not behind the Mayor on this issue. He also said he would send out an extensive mailing of the speech himself. He got the Chambers mailing list and the Chamber said it never sent out any literature but its own, the Mayor was a Chamber member, and it was very happy to let the Mayor see the list. This is the second time that the Mayor has turned against the businessmen of Jackson--a most eccentric phenomena considering the present crisis in the city. If the Mayor totally flips, it will be bad because the other two commissioners are even worse on integration.

Millsaps has come out with a statement saying that it is now segregated and is not presently planning to change. Also, a Rebel Underground publication has come out there. We hear that it has backing from someone off campus--like the Council maybe.

February 22-23 I attended an Executive Committee meeting of SNCC in Atlanta.

A number (dozen or so) of our students went to Canton for Freedom Day. Also, most of the kids at Tougaloo from Canton just stayed home that day. Quite a few instructors went over and one registered to vote (white--he had no trouble and was even helped by the registrar).

The faculty is becoming more active in the Movement and is beginning to do things on its own. At least one carload went to Canton "independently." They are involved to a greater degree in church visits and other activities. One faculty member organized a movie visit (discussed below), and some others went to a lecture at Millsaps on the 28th. The lecture was by a man from the British consulate and two of the faculty members are from Commonwealth nations. It was scheduled for the Student Union (off limits) and got moved to the Christian Center with a frank explanation of why. This is the first time anyone from Tougaloo has tried to go to the Student Union.

Visits continue regularly to the COFO office and every other week to the library. They may pick up at the library when papers start coming due.

Johnson's (Governor) image is getting a bit tarnished. He has endorsed the moves to revoke our charter, has called for an enlarged (by 200) state patrol, and increased power to the state patrol to work off the main highways. (The day of the Freedom Day in Canton one of their patrol cars was on our campus, though.) Also, there has been quite a bit of rather obvious legislation in the two months he has been in office. We didn't have hardly any legislation during Barnett--just application of normally valid laws.

The United Front (which formed among whites to combat the boycott) has sent out a mailing of 30,000 to whites, telling what stores Negroes are boycotting and encouraging them to shop there. We hear from other sources that the boycott has been hurting downtown. This mailing was widely announced on radio and TV. There are informers even in the United Front, so more details should be available later.

Church visits continue, but without outside help of late. The Methodists are concentrating on their General Conference at the end of April, and visits should pick up just before then. Galloway Methodist has Lenten communion services on Thursday. Students went (and were turned away) on February 20 and March 5. On February 23, an all white group went to Foundren (events described in newsletter). On March 1 an integrated group went to St. James Episcopal but got there at the close of the service because we were busy dodging a road block. Some city students were supposed to visit other churches that day, but they never got together. On March 8th integrated groups went to First Christian and Foundren Presbyterian. First Christian fired its minister last fall and has had a very hard time trying to secure a replacement. The man who turned us away was much nicer (apologised for mispronouncing Tougaloo, for instance) than folks have been there before. At Foundren we met the same man as

we have nearly every week since September. He is getting a bit shakey, and revealed some interesting information. We still didn't get in.

Threats and such have dropped off for a week now. The campus was shot onto about 2 a.m. last Sunday morning, but that is all. No phone calls, no road blocks, no nothing. The incident of Feb. 23 was described in some detail in our newsletter. In brief, a car was stopped by about 5 other cars carrying 20 white mens. They were carrying pipes and tried to break in the front windshield. However, one car pulled over too far and the car from Tougaloo was able to continue on to church. All occupants were white and they were able to attend services. That afternoon, a couple from the church came out to campus to express apologies for whites. That same day the phone calling started. It continued until last Wednesday. Most of it came late at night or Friday-Sunday, starting around 8 p.m. First they would call Rev. King and then Mr. Hutchnson. About four people were involved in most of the calls. Most were pretty filthy and threatening. Some just hung up. A few were rather detailed as to what they were going to do. Jamerson (the girls dorm) also had a few calls, including another bomb threat on Feb. 29th. On the 28th, two shots were fired onto the campus.

Traveling on the roads seems to be safer, but I don't trust it. It seems a planned relaxation, because the phone calls stopped too and we know the two are connected. A red VW has been involved everytime a car has been stopped (Feb. 23 and Feb. 16). A red VW was seen near the school on Sunday morning, March 1. One was also seen in an area where cars have been stopped (the turn off from the new highway) the evening of March 5. Earlier that week one passed a car headed down the old highway (VW going toward school, car going down to town) and turned around to follow it. The car going from school was integrated. This seems to be more than chance because some of us have been paying special attention to VW's in Jackson. Nearly all of them are very light. One person on campus has one, and the only other one we have seen is innocent (at the time we saw it). So it's a pretty safe bet that the ones reported above are all the same. Another car we have seen a lot of is a white one (I don't know the make). It came up on campus three Sundays in a row (no one saw it last Sunday). A man, woman, and child are always in it. The first week it had S.C. tags, the next week Texas tags, and the 3rd week a Mississippi tag on back and a Texas tag on front. We got both of those. It cruises around the campus a couple of times and leaves. If you speak to the man, he gives vague answers as to what he is doing. We don't trust them.

On March 1 no-one was stopped on the way to church. Only one car went out, and it wasn't Rev. Hutchinson's (the one best known). We saw what we believe was a road block setting up on the old highway--two cars pointing on the road in a lot and two pointing toward the road (directly across from the first two) on an access road. So we turned around. We did quite a lot of wandering around, but (leaving out details) we saw a car which apparently left the four and went as far as the access road to the New Highway looking for us. It was driving slowly and turned around at the turn off. Same

color, but the distance was too great to identify beyond that. Also making us think it was a road block is the fact that it would be most unusual to find that many cars around one point on the road at 7:20 a.m. on Sunday. We have no idea why the threats and roadblocks have stopped, unless it is a war on nerves (which isn't working). Oh yes. Not only were there not any unfriendly cars last Sunday, there weren't any police--for the first time in months. (Police along the roads away from schools that is, they were still at the churches--one car with a dog barking loudly.)

One really promising development is with the movies. They seem to be either integrating or wavering. You will remember the incident in the last report. The other background to this is that one of the instructors has done some negotiating for a gradual integration. Starting with one day a week with small groups being sent down, and then going from there if all goes well. I don't know what ever came of that, if anything. However, integrated groups have attended two movies lately--without incident. At the Paramount (on Capitol St.--had to break the boycott) Cleopatra is showing. The paper advertizes that advance tickets are on sale and all ticket holders guaranteed a seat. Some of the faculty (white, Pakistanian, and Indian) and one Negro student went with advance tickets one day and got in without incident or anything. Last Sunday night, five students went back (3 Negro, 2 white, all male). They got in without any trouble and were seated about 5 minutes when the manager put them out. The manager said he wouldn't let anyone else in till they got out, that someone else had pulled the same trick earlier, and that the next group would be arrested. Some of the faculty is talking about going back. At the Capri they were sold out (for real) Saturday night. On Sunday night four of us went (2 white, 2 Negro) and were sold tickets and admitted without any trouble. An usher even pointed out the ticket window (it's sort of hid from view when you walk in) to the Negro girls. The Capri is the best movie house in town and also nearest to the school. It will take a few more visits before we feel sure of anything, but Sunday night was not an accident.

Peace.

Jean