

Report Meridian June 6, 1964 Rita Schwerner

A great deal has happened since my last report was written. On Friday, ~~Jan~~ May 22, we started a selective buying campaign of the three five and ten cent stores here in Meridian. They are: Kress, Newberry's and Woolworth's. We had previously attempted to negotiate with the store managers, to no avail. Letters were sent to the National Offices--no results. We are asking for sales jobs for Negroes and the desegregation of the lunch counters. On May 23, one young man was arrested for passing out leaflets. On Sat., May 30, 11 more people were arrested for interfering with a man's business--a state law. The trials were to take place on Wed., June 3, but the attorney, John Doe, obtained a week's continuance. He is attempting to have the cases removed to Federal Court on the grounds that no one can obtain a fair civil rights trial in a Mississippi Court. The boycott appears to be fairly successful, but a delegation of ministers, accompanied by a staff person, who attempted once more to speak with the managers this morning, were rebuffed. Any further discussion will now have to be initiated by the managers. If there is no break thru this week, further direct action, perhaps in the form of a picket line, is planned for next Saturday.

The Community Center is functioning fairly well, with children using the facilities in greater number now that school is out. It has become a place to explain to people the importance of the movement, and the part they can play in it. We received a shipment of 200 new dresses, of different sizes and materials, and we are distributing them to needy persons. We still follow the procedure that all Leuderdale Co. residents who are over 21, must register to vote before they receive either material or clothing. We explain that this is a necessary step to alleviate the conditions which make the distribution of clothing necessary. The number of women receiving clothing and free material has been reduced since this procedure was introduced about a month ago, but we feel that at least the people we are reaching are really attempting to help themselves.

We have been holding mass meetings frequently, and have one scheduled for every night this coming week.

We are being thrown out of our house on Monday. We have been able to find housing for everyone but Mickey and myself. The two of us are searching for an apartment, but anything that is available people are afraid to rent to us, and what we could have is not empty. We have been receiving large numbers of prank calls since the latest boycott started, and one person has been calling all night long the past several nights. We don't like to take ~~the~~ ^{mine} phone off the hook, but have started to do so when we go to sleep. On ~~Saturday~~ ^{Friday} our water was turned off, and on Friday the gas and electricity. We now have the water and gas back, but not the electricity. Evidently someone had called the different companies saying he was Mickey and asking that service be discontinued. All of this is annoying and takes time to straighten out, but to be expected. It should be added that the clerks in the different companies are not anxious to remedy the situation the moment they realize who Mickey is.

We are, as usual, in need of money. We have 125 dollars tied up in bond right now. Rent on the office and other bills are due.