



VIVA!

# TULARE COUNTY RENT STRIKE, MARCH

VISALIA, CALIFORNIA -

On July 16, 350 farm workers and supporters lead by a white habited nun, shouting "viva liberty", "viva dignity" marched six miles down a narrow dusty road in Tulare County, California, to attend a regularly scheduled meeting of the County Housing Authority. The March was called to protest recent rent raises in the county-owned housing in which the farm workers live at Woodville and Linnell Farm Labor Camps.

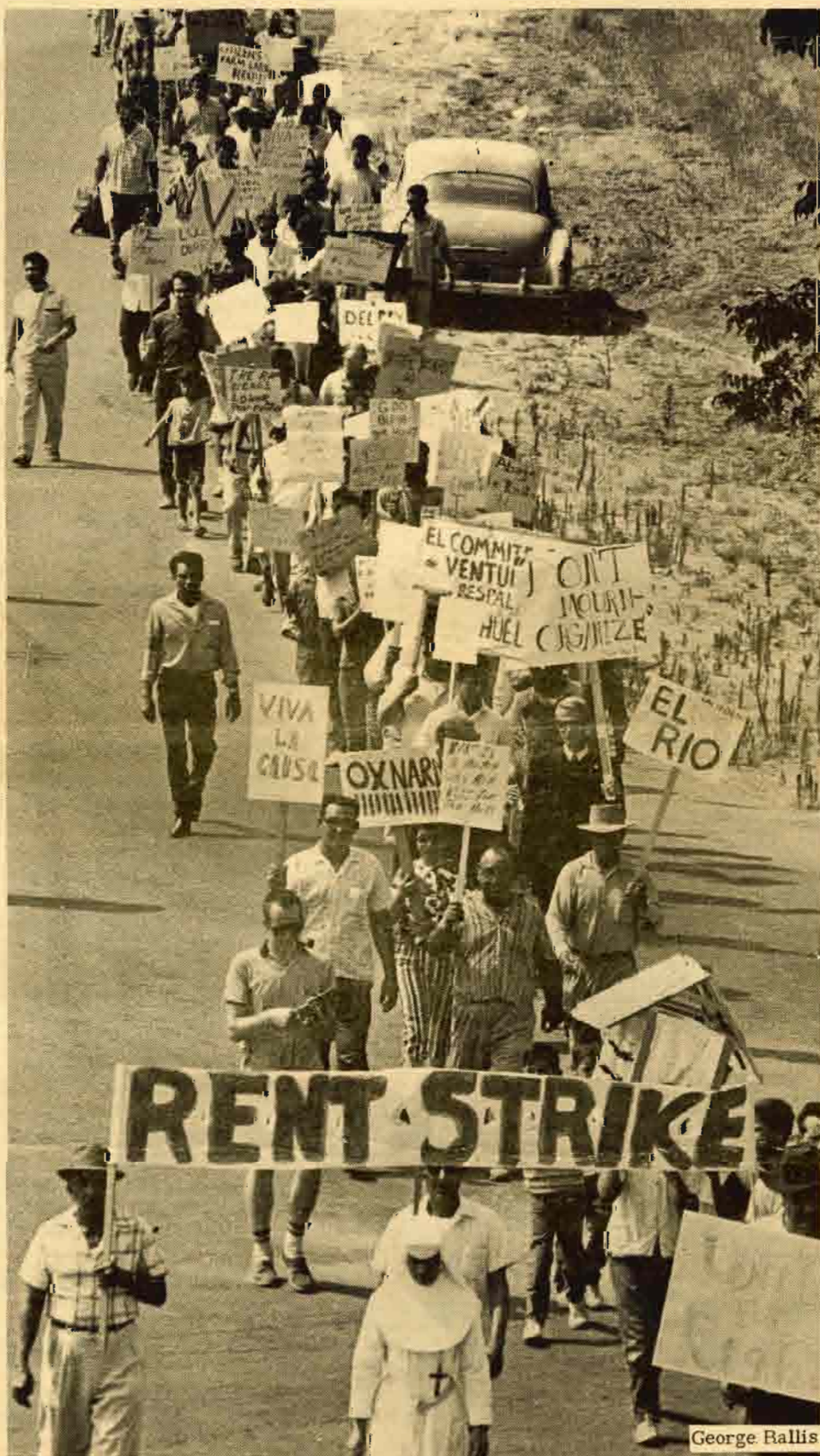
When the marchers arrived at the offices of the County Housing Authority they were told that the Housing Authority was not meeting because of a lack of a quorum. The march continued on to the nearby Visalia Presbyterian Church where a rally was held, labor journalist Paul Jacobs spoke, and a petition was drawn up and signed. The petition was addressed to the Board of Supervisors of Tulare County and was presented to them after the rally broke up and the march continued on for another mile and a half to the Tulare County Hall.

The petition read: "Residents of Woodville and Linnell who marched six miles to meet the Tulare Housing Authority and who were ignored, ask the Tulare County Board of Supervisors to intervene and ask them to lower the rent in the substandard housing that they own and operate."

What the march was protesting, as the petition points out, was the May rent raises on the housing that the farm workers live in, and the condition of the housing itself. One lady, who has lived in Linnell for three years, and who had taken a day off from her job in the tomato fields where she works ten hours a day for \$12.50 a day, explained the reason for the protest: "We were paying \$18.50 for rent (a month) and five dollars for the next cabin because there are only four people allowed to live in each cabin. There are some families that have 8, 10, 12 children. They have to rent three or four cabins. Starting the month of June it was that we have to pay \$25 for the first cabin and \$10 for the second cabin. There are people that have four cabins; that means that they have to pay 55 dollars."

Since the first of June when the rents were raised, 500 to 600 people in the two farm labor camps have refused to pay their rent to the Housing Authority and have opened an account in the local Bank of America and payed the old rents to the account. The organizers of the protest march and the rent strike came from the Farm Workers Association, (a Spanish-

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MARCH OF FARM WORKERS from Linnell Labor Camp to Visalia in protest against rents being raised by the Housing Authority. Nearly 350 people participated.

## The Voice Of The Farm Workers SAME AS THE NEGROES

How have the Negroes won their battles? They have united before the dogs, the fire hoses, police brutality and electric cattle prods. When they are threatened, they sing their fight song, "We shall overcome." When everybody expects them to run, instead they kneel down and pray. When they seem beaten, they make victory out of their defeat. They use the only things they've got, their bodies and their courage and with these they continue to overcome.

We the farm workers have the same weapons -- our bodies and our courage. But we have hardly begun using these weapons. In McFarland the farm workers followed the path already traveled by the Negroes. Here we showed the power of unity and this won us some of the money which the boss has been stealing from us.

In the rent strike once again the farm worker is showing what he learned from the Negro movement. We have learned that when we unite, we have been able to make the government come to our call and correct its imperious manner against the poor people. The Housing Commission of Tulare County is afraid of organized people.

Each day the working people are proving their courage more and more as the Negroes do in their movement. The day in which we the farm workers apply this lesson with the same courage which has been shown in Alabama and Mississippi, this will be the day in which the misfortune of the farm workers will end.

Reprinted from *El Malcriado*, newspaper of the Farm Workers Association, Delano, California. Translated by Maria Vargas.

The idea of a Freedom Labor Union is spreading throughout the South. On the night of July 22, 1965, a Tennessee Freedom Labor Union was formed. Its members come from four counties in Tennessee -- Fayette, Haywood, Hardaman, and Tipton. The chairman of the TFLU, William Spring-

field, is a tractor driver from Fayette County who works for two dollars a day. On the same day that the union was formed, Springfield was elected chairman and was also fired from his job.

The TFLU is primarily centered around Fayette County, Tennessee, the poorest county in the South and the fourth poorest in the United States. Negroes there are employed as sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and renters. Some are small land owners. In one area, tractor drivers and cotton choppers are paid \$2 per day. The sharecroppers in this area have had their shares cut down to six acres. Since this has happened, they are forced to work as day laborers for \$2 per day in order to support their families.

### THE OLD MOVEMENT

The first civil rights activity in the area was started in 1959 when the Fayette County Civic and Welfare League began to organize voter registration. At that time the Negroes were thrown off their land and one of the first civil rights cities was established. The people have continued to be active in the civil rights movement and have organized to such an extent that they have learned how to poll-watch and count ballots. At the present time there are about 3600 registered Negroes and about the same number of registered whites in the county.

In the last election Negroes supported a local white man for sheriff and a Negro minister for tax assessor. Both men lost. Most of the poll watchers and ballot counters weren't allowed into the polling places. If the election had been fairly conducted the voting would have been very close.

### THE YOUNG MOVEMENT

A new civil rights organization in the area is the West Tennessee Voters Project (WTVP) which was organized in May, 1964 when the Fayette County Student Union asked COFO workers from Holly Springs, Mississippi, to come in and help them organize public accommodations tests. The project has continued since then and is now staffed mostly by students from Cornell University. (Ed. note: there has been a book written on the Fayette Project -- *Step by Step*, published by W.W. Norton)

The immediate impetus for the organization of the TFLU seems to have grown out of a split between the League and the WTVP. In recent weeks, leaders of the League have been talking against the WTVP, charging that they are communist, that they are whites that are trying to take over, and that they are there only for sex.

### AN ANGRY MEETING

On July 6, the League called a mass meeting at Summerville, Tennessee to discuss the WTVP. The meeting was described as a panel discussion on the WTVP and the "so called freedom schools," but all the speakers except one were leaders of the League. About 300 people were at the meeting, which is far more than usual. The speeches, which were made by some of the leaders of the League, were primarily slanted against the white civil rights workers. After the meeting was over and the League leaders left, the audience, which had not been allowed to voice its opinion during the meeting, stayed on and held their own meeting. People from other parts of the county (including one girl from Benton County, Mississippi) said that if the civil rights workers were thrown out of Summerville, they would be welcome in their areas. People got up and talked about low wages. They talked about the fact that they didn't like the way the League leaders hadn't let the people speak, and that they were making charges without naming people. As one civil rights worker who was there reported, "It was a revolution of the people."

### GAP IN AGE AND MONEY

The reason for the split has been attributed to the gap that existed between the members of the League and the members of the audience that night. The League members have been active in the movement since 1959 and are the better off members of the Negro community, while at the same time the people that composed the audience represented the people who are comparatively new to the struggle -- the young and the laborers. The members of the League have suffered years of harassment and intimidation; the members of the audience and those who support the WTVP are, in a sense, just beginning their struggle.



## FROM THE WATS REPORTS SNCC ORGANIZES MIGRANTS



GEORGE SHELTON, SHAW ORGANIZER

DENTON, MARYLAND. Four SNCC people were arrested in mid-July for trespassing in a migrant workers camp, Wadeell's Corner Camp. The four workers, Steve Fraser, Great Neck, Long Island, Tom Holt, Danville, Va., Frank Bass, Greenwood, Miss., and Roosevelt Vaughn, Starksville, Miss., were arrested by the Dorchester county police when they went to the camp to take part in a meeting to organize a strike.

As soon as they entered the camp, they were arrested by the police, who knew that they were coming because of the leaflets SNCC workers passed out, announcing the meeting. The meeting was held anyway. Civil rights workers stood in the road, and 150 migrant workers stood on the other side of the property line. The staff taught the workers "We Shall Overcome" and other songs. They were hoping to have people from all camps in the county, but people from other camps did not come. SNCC workers have been

chased out of five camps now by the farmers. Migrant workers are mostly Negroes from Florida.

Although this strike may be small, it has tremendous implications for the system of migrant labor on the East Coast from Mississippi to Maine. As far as we know, there has never been a successful strike by migrant workers. A staff member says the living conditions of the migrants are the same as those of the laborers in the Mississippi Delta.

After the migrant workers have gone, SNCC workers will be working with permanent residents of the Eastern Shore. It is the same farmers who pay migrants low wages that control the shore, economically and politically, and are responsible for keeping the wages of the local whites and Negroes low. In Denton, there are permanent residents, both Negro and white, who are very poor -- generally factory workers. SNCC has had several interracial meetings with them.

P.O. Box 197  
Shaw Miss.

### TO WHOM THIS MAY CONCERN

I am Mrs. Willie M. Griggs, a Negro midwife of Shaw, Mississippi.

Let me, for a few minutes, have your attention on the subject "My State and My Nation."

I choose this subject because I feel this is my State and my Nation. I am not asking to be mayor, governor or president; I only want to be accepted in this God-created (not man-created) world. Because I feel that God made this world for me, too, or he wouldn't have made me.

Abraham Lincoln said in his address, "Our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." But personally, are we? Are we really?

Here in Mississippi, our wages are extremely low (as if we don't work longer hours). Ten hours a day is the system.

Another thing is our history. I feel if we had a part in your history books (without being a slave) you would understand us better. You see we weren't always slaves. We fought in wars too. Maybe we weren't as smart in our books as you were so we were made into fools because of our lack of knowledge. I believe we had some great heroes, only their names weren't recorded or the credit was given to you. Maybe the medals were given to us and you (whites) got the credit, with your name written for all the records.

I don't want you smiling at me because you feel it your duty or that you have to. I want my people to work with you without asking themselves, are they truly being friendly or just pretending so they can stand next to my black face so their theirs can shine out whereas it wouldn't shine among their own race.

Let's be reasonable. In the eyes of God we are equal. But man don't think so. We as Negroes are judged by the worst one of us. Whereas you (whites) are judge by our president in most cases.

We were ignorant but we can be just as intelligent as you. We have, too, on our side great men, doctors, scientists, etc. We can work together without being completely invisible.

Let's face it, we are living each day in this world together and I do believe we can help each other. If I extended my hand to you now, saying let's be friends, would you accept it with feelings of Superiority over me because my skin is black? Or because I am a Negro? Or would you accept it with gratitude?

Yours very truly,  
Willie M. Griggs

PLEASE SEND ME THE NEXT 12 ISSUES  
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## Coleman \*\*\*

"(Governor Coleman). . . is one of the shrewdest opponents of the Supreme Court ever to be nominated to a judicial post to carry out decrees of the Supreme Court."

--Drew Pearson

## Confirmed \*\*\*

On July 26 the Senate confirmed the appointment of J. P. Coleman to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. The vote was 76 to 8.

These senators voted against the appointment:

Jacob K. Javits (Rep.), New York  
Wayne Morse (Dem.), Oregon  
Clifford P. Case (Rep.), New Jersey  
John Sherman Cooper (Rep.), Kentucky  
Paul H. Douglas (Dem.), Illinois  
Philip A. Hart (Dem.), Michigan  
Gaylord Nelson (Dem.), Wisconsin  
William Proxmire (Dem.), Wisconsin

Three other Democrats were paired against the nomination: Walter F. Mondale of Minnesota, Maurine B. Neuberger of Oregon and Vance Hartke of Indiana.

## By Senate \*\*\*

"(Governor Coleman). . . is the only person with the legal experience and skill to consistently outmaneuver the Federal Courts, Congress and the Executive. He is the thinking man's segregationist."

--Representative

John D. Conyers, Michigan

## They Printed The Depositions

The Clerk of the House of Representatives has, after much delay, submitted the printed depositions of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to the Speaker. Everything submitted by the FDP was printed. The Challenge is now officially in the hands of the House Subcommittee on Elections and Privileges.

Enough copies of the depositions were printed for the Subcommittee. Copies should be available later for each House member. Authority for printing additional copies for the public rests with the House Administration Committee, and copies may not be available unless continued pressure is applied to individual Congressmen and to committee members.

### A New Publication

Every 2 weeks, SNCC reprints articles, original writing and analysis -- 40 pages of material of crucial interest in the movement.

Price: \$10 a year. It's expensive but worth it. Write to SNCC, 1316 Masonic Ave., San Francisco 17. Ask for a subscription to the KEY LIST MAILING.

Dear Friends,

I am A member of the miss.

Freedom Labor union and we need

help badly such as money and

Food their are 100 people on

strike here and need help

there about 3000 in the

state on strike they are

striking for \$1.25 an hour.

Your truly,

George Shelton

LETTER sent to THE MOVEMENT by one of the officers of the striking Freedom Labor Union. The address, Box 194, Shaw, is a union headquarters.

## FARM WAGE HEARINGS

### Does It Take Slavery?

WASHINGTON, D.C.--A House committee seeking to extend minimum wage coverage to farm laborers has heard from the workers themselves for the first time.

The House Committee on Labor and Public Welfare heard, July 15, from sharecroppers and cotton pickers, including a representative from the Freedom Labor Union of cotton workers in Mississippi's Delta region.

Aaron German and Andrew Hawkins, from Shaw MFLU, told the committee that workers in their area earned 30¢ an hour. Hawkins said "kids have to drop out of school because their parents can't support them on the wages they make."

#### Somehow

#### They Can't Afford it

A spokesman for the National Cotton Council, a lobbying group of wealthy cotton farmers, said cotton was a \$15 billion-a-year industry that employed nine million people. He said that the industry was unable, however, to pay day workers \$1.25 an hour.

Representative James Roosevelt (D-California) asked the Cotton Council spokesman, "Do you mean that this is what it takes to grow cotton. . . that it takes slavery? If so, I'd rather not see cotton grown."

Hawkins, one of the organizers of the

Mississippi Freedom Labor Union, told the House Committee that federal subsidies go only to landowners, and never to sharecroppers. Hawkins said sharecroppers were told how much to plant, when to plant it, and when to pick it.

#### Prison Labor Used

In further testimony, Hawkins said that on a plantation owned by Senator James O. Eastland (D-Mississippi) workers received such low wages they were forced to operate illegal liquor stills to supplement their income. Hawkins also said that Senator Eastland uses prison labor on his farm.

Median income for Mississippi Negroes across the state is \$660. Negroes in rural areas, like Mr. Hawkins' home in Shaw, average \$474 a year, according to a report issued by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

Nearly 1,000 members of the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union have been on strike in Mississippi's Delta counties for several months. They are demanding \$1.25 minimum wage for all workers, and an end to child labor.

The House sub-committee hearing testimony is made up of Mrs. Edith Green from Oregon, Augustus Hawkins from California, Dominic Danniell from New Jersey, and James Roosevelt from California.

# NAACP CONVENTION

## Some Members Complain About "Restrictions"

A variety of impressions, both critical and hopeful, were brought back by Western region delegates from the NAACP convention held in Denver June 28 to July 3. Cited on the plus side by delegates were workshops and sweeping resolutions in areas of housing, economic advancement and community organization, a strong endorsement of direct action as strategically vital in furthering the goals of civil rights, and an increased emphasis on the role of youth in the movement.

Criticisms were levelled largely at "organizational rigidity." The convention was structured on unit rule, decided upon when the Association's five regional groups met in caucus. The result was efficient in terms of system but seemed finally incapable of reflecting rank-and-file membership views as the convention progressed. "If the membership had not been so restricted by organization," said one delegate, "they might have been more progressive."

The closed operation of the Resolutions Committee was likened to that of a "star chamber"; delegates complained that they could not tell what was going on. Terry Francois of the San Francisco delegation tried to gain admission to the Committee proceedings and was refused. When the resolutions approved for a vote were brought to the floor, they were presented to the members in printed form. "While you were trying to find out what a resolution said," one member reported, "they were already calling for a vote." Delegates are still without copies of the resolutions as amended during the session.

### BIRMINGHAM VETOED

One of the high points in conflict came when the Alabama delegation requested that the next convention be held in Birmingham; the NAACP was outlawed in Alabama for ten years and has just recently been recognized as legal in that state. Peter Hill, spokesman for the Alabama delegation, noted a convention invitation to NAACP from the president of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce. However, Los Angeles had already been agreed upon for the next convention, and the Western region, fighting to retain this decision, gained support from Eastern region delegates by agreeing to vote for Atlantic City as the site of the convention a year following.

This deal was met with a floor demonstration by the Southeastern delegation, carrying placards reading "Are you afraid to come to Alabama?" Popular membership sympathy appeared to lie with the Alabama NAACP, a Birmingham convention would be a meaningful gesture of support for the South.

Individuals could not vote, however, because of unit rule, and the other four regional delegations had committed themselves to the Los Angeles-Atlantic City compromise. In censure, Region Five walked out of the convention. "Of course Los Angeles has problems in civil rights, crucial ones," observed one delegate. "But the Birmingham convention plan was an important symbolic gesture, and its defeat may have cost us Southern youth support."

### MILD ON COLEMAN

Another crisis on the convention floor appeared when the subject of federal judicial appointments came up. Executive secretary Roy Wilkins and Clarence Mitchell,

NAACP's Washington lobbyist, were attacked on the floor over their refusal to take a more militant position against the appointment of Mississippi segregationist ex-Governor Coleman to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

### NEVER HEARD OF BOGALUSA

The San Francisco delegation's Bogalusa resolution was introduced to the Resolutions Committee by Clinton White of Oakland and pushed in the Committee for approval by Jefferson Thomas, one of the original "Little Rock Nine." The San Francisco group had wanted the resolution to ask for a national boycott of Crown Zellerbach, but the national committee retorted that this would be impossible to achieve. The resolution was approved after being amended to a request that all NAACP offices withhold patronage from Crown Zellerbach products, and that the Board of Directors "prepare a list of all Crown Zellerbach products by brand name for distribution to the chapters." The resolution had been presented to the Louisiana delegation for approval, and while Louisiana NAACP did not oppose the resolution, they said they did not know anything about Bogalusa -- some 90 miles from New Orleans.

Delegates favoring the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party Congressional Challenge were disturbed that no specific support for the Challenge was suggested by NAACP leaders, and pressed for a stronger resolution on Mississippi Congressional representation. The resulting resolution, while not specifically mentioning the MFDP, urged Congress to "exclude from its membership all present members from Mississippi by utilizing its authority under the Constitution... without delay."

### VIETNAM MOVE KILLED

A resolution on Vietnam was introduced to the Resolutions Committee on the grounds that the convention was discussing the freedom of peoples. "This," remarked one source, "is as far as any mention of peace got at the convention." The resolution reportedly was not approved on the grounds that "civil rights and the peace movement should be separate," and that such a resolution was entering the sphere of foreign affairs "outside the NAACP bailiwick." The resolution requesting foreign countries to refuse visas to Mormon

church representatives, which reached the convention floor, was defeated on a similar argument, that it was worded in such a way as to go beyond domestic affairs, and that it addressed itself directly to foreign powers -- as well as ignoring others' rights in its abrogation of the right to travel.

The passage of the resolution condemning South African apartheid and U.S. economic support of it was defended on the basis of "undeniable local racist oppression similar to our own" supported by \$800,000,000 of U.S. money invested in the South African economy. The resolution also cited as a danger of continued apartheid "possible escalation into world conflict." Many delegates felt this contradicted the reasons given for not allowing the Vietnam resolution on the floor.

### CONTRADICTIONS

One delegate described it as "a convention of contradictions, at the bottom of which were people who would have gone along with more meaningful activity than the people on top."

The entire convention, top to bottom, did face certain issues with common purpose. The great danger to the stated objectives of the anti-poverty program was identified as the already evident degeneration into "an extension of white welfare paternalism"; the resolution on economic advancement called for determination of programs and their operation by "the people and groups to be represented, rather than by selection of individuals or institutions not related to them."

Investigation of urban renewal programs on a community-wide rather than a unit basis was urged, as well as advocacy of rent receivership laws to combat slumlord housing code violations.

The resolution on political action called for increased voter registration activity, lauded the Supreme Court's one man-one vote reapportionment decision, and emphasized active opposition to passage of the Dirksen amendment. The civil rights resolution called for discouragement of "the growing tendency of the part of federal, state and local governments to exclude competent Negroes with civil rights identification and experience from policy and decision-making positions" in agencies charged with implementing the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

## Is There Truth In This ?

"Dignitary leaders tend to be either handpicked by the white power structure or catapulted into fame by white press coverage of some mass event. . .

Many dignitaries are self-styled leaders; they rule by the divine right of self-decree. Like those who come to power by white appointment, they are leaders without followers. They exist on their reputation in, and alliance, with, the white world. On the other hand those Negroes with large followings (the late Father Divine, Bishop Jones, Sweet Daddy McCollough and Elder Michaeux) are either not known or not accepted by whites, and thus not regarded as leaders. . .

Unlike white rulers, dignitary leaders regard power as synonymous with prestige and charisma, rather than the ability to influence the behavior of others. The influence of these dignitary "power-wielders" is easily undermined; either by the opposition of the Negro masses or that of influential whites. As eunuch leaders, they must be content with a pawnshop power, acquired by their readiness to peddle the Negro's welfare for white favor. At best they serve as electric contacts in the circuit of white-Negro polarity. Many are "window-dressing" Negroes, selected for token or symbolic positions by white politicians seeking to capture, retrieve, or retain Negro allegiance. Set apart from other Negroes, they are led (and misled) by white remote control. This hand-me-down power is the basis of their authority.

-- from THE BLACK ANGLO-SAXONS by Nathan Hare

## MODERATE DEMOCRATIC BODY FORMED Excludes Rights Workers

A new political group, the Mississippi Democratic Conference, has sprung up in this state with the announced purpose of challenging the dominance of the state's dixiecrats and electing candidates loyal to the national party. Claude Ramsey, president of the state AFL-CIO, and Charles Evers of the NAACP spearheaded the drive to organize the conference and invited hundreds to the organizing meeting last Sunday. Only 125 showed, including 27 Negroes.

No Negroes or whites active with the Freedom Democratic Party, COFO, SNCC, or CORE were invited, continuing the policy or sometimes forcible exclusion of civil rights oriented Democrats practiced by Ramsey and Evers at earlier planning meetings.

### UP FOR GRABS

"Everybody wants to form a political machine which can buy, beg or steal the

potentially huge Negro vote," one observer commented.

Critics point out that if the Democratic Conference is serious about challenging the segregationists, why do they invite only middle class, urban Negroes to their organizing meeting? How about the poor, the unemployed and the people who live on the plantations in the delta? If the Democratic Conference claims to back the national party, why didn't it seek support from the Freedom Democratic Party, the only political group in the state which gave its total support to the national party last August and November?

### DOESN'T BOTHER DIXIECRATS

So far the state's dixiecrats are unperterbed by the development, probably because, with the exception of miniscule participation of Negroes, no programmatic questions involving the status quo in Mississippi as yet distinguish the two groups from each other.

Claude Ramsey is not a favorite of most Mississippi Negroes. He has not helped organize the \$3.00 a day cotton choppers of the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union. He has not opened the doors to thousands of qualified Negroes into the carpenters, plumbers or electricians unions. Many remember the 1964 Mississippi Labor Council convention, where Ramsey assured the advocates of segregated unionism that he would not be intimidated by what he called "pressure tactics" of civil rights groups -- including his new allies -- seeking Negro representation in some of the trade unions.

In the race for the Negro vote Claude Ramsey and the Democratic Conference have gotten off to a bad start. The big question remains -- how much money is the national party willing to give the group? Mississippi Negroes are acutely aware of the lessons of the civil rights movement; they have seen that only the direct action of their organizations, united with the direct

## SDS Project WEST OAKLAND RESIDENTS FIGHT DESTRUCTION

It's been a turbulent July for the conservative Oakland, California Housing Authority. The Authority decided to employ Job Corps workers in a "beautification program" in the Peralta Villa housing project. When the residents of the project, who had not been consulted, awoke to find their backyard fences being torn down, they mobilized to stop the work.

Three days after the Job Corps workers arrived at Peralta Villa, about 80 tenants came together at a meeting and formed the Peralta Improvement League (PIL).

PIL members picketed and sat-in and brought the Authority's program to a quick stop. Roving groups of residents would spot destruction and then rally forces until the work ceased. The sit-ins included sitting in wheelbarrows.

### LABOR GROUP EMBARRASSED

The Alameda County Central Labor Council was caught in the middle of the dispute. The Housing Authority had contracted the Job Corps teenagers through the Labor Council. The Council withdrew them to await a resolution of the dispute.

At press-time, the controversy is moving toward a resolution. Tenants demanded to see the plans for the beautification program before the August 9 meeting of the Housing Authority. Refused this, they organized building meetings, in which they drew up plans of their own.

The PIL has also picketed the business places of the Housing Commissioners. A one-day phone-in, during which tenants kept the phones of housing officials constantly busy with such questions as "Why did you tear down our fences?" took place.

Public Housing officials have been thrown for a loop by these events. Mistaken in their assumption that it would all blow away, they tried to intimidate PIL activists with threats of eviction and other scare tactics.

Even more upsetting to the authorities are PIL's tactics. Tenants marched, rallied and petitioned early in June to get R.J. Guichard, Housing Authority Executive Director, to appear at a public meeting. When he refused, 60 tenants appeared at the July meeting. With the aid of police, the Commission locked out all but eight, allotted five minutes to each, and interrupted them during their talks.

The PIL tenants have been aided in their fight by the West Oakland project of SDS, Students for a Democratic Society. This project is similar to SDS efforts in other Northern cities. Students have encouraged and helped to build community organizations that will give voice and power to residents of impoverished areas.

### BART DISCRIMINATES

Some SDS members have been working with another group, the Unemployed Rights Committee (URC). URC, together with the Oakland Direct Action Committee, SDS, the Richmond Protest Council and Progressive Labor, demonstrated at the tunnel site of the Bay Area Rapid Transit, demanding that BART hire local construction workers.

The BART contractor is hiring out-of-town people to do the 7-year job. 99 per cent of the workers are white. A lot of jobs are at stake, and rank-and-filers in East Bay laborers locals are moving with URC to get their unions to force BART to hire local men who need the jobs.

action of their supporters across the country, generated the pressure for the passage of the civil rights act and the coming voting rights bill. The white moderates -- the 13% of the whites who did not vote for Goldwater last November -- will have a difficult time finding leaders who have not already discredited themselves in the eyes of many Negroes.

### BIG FIGHT AHEAD

The Democratic Conference -- "like the campfollowers who scavenge behind the lines and then try to take all the credit for the war", in the words of one FDP worker -- seeks to grow through compromise and accommodation based on an avoidance of political discussion. By token desegregation and avowed support of the Democratic administration, they hope to capture the Negro vote. By shunning the active civil rights movement they seek to make themselves palatable to the white voters. Most observers feel that an open clash with the FDP, which seeks to organize a mass grass-roots base and is committed to full and open political discussion within the ranks, is unavoidable in the near future.

# 'WE WANT UNIONS, WE WANT ACTION'

"It looks bad when a kid can't go to school and be taught the truth, and the teachers can't spend their time on their books helping the kids with their lessons. They'll talk about someone running for office or someone being a "Communist." They tell the kids that a Communist is a person trying to make someone do something he doesn't want to do. Well you know that is just what the Appalachian Committee is fighting against. They are fighting people being driven to non-union mines to work no matter how small the wages or how far it is from home. They say go back to the mines or you can't have the food stamps, or being afraid to wear the sticker of a Candidate if the money power doesn't like him. Could it be they don't like him because he is a union man? Or being afraid not to vote for a man, afraid you will lose a job. Is this freedom? Is this giving a man his freedom?"

We want unions, we want them so the operators can't make us do the things we don't want to do. That is against the union contracts. We want work in here that pays enough so we don't need to go to the food stamp office and be made to feel like we are not humans. The way I see it the laboring man needs his freedom. It still spells out the big shot wants to tell the little man what to do.

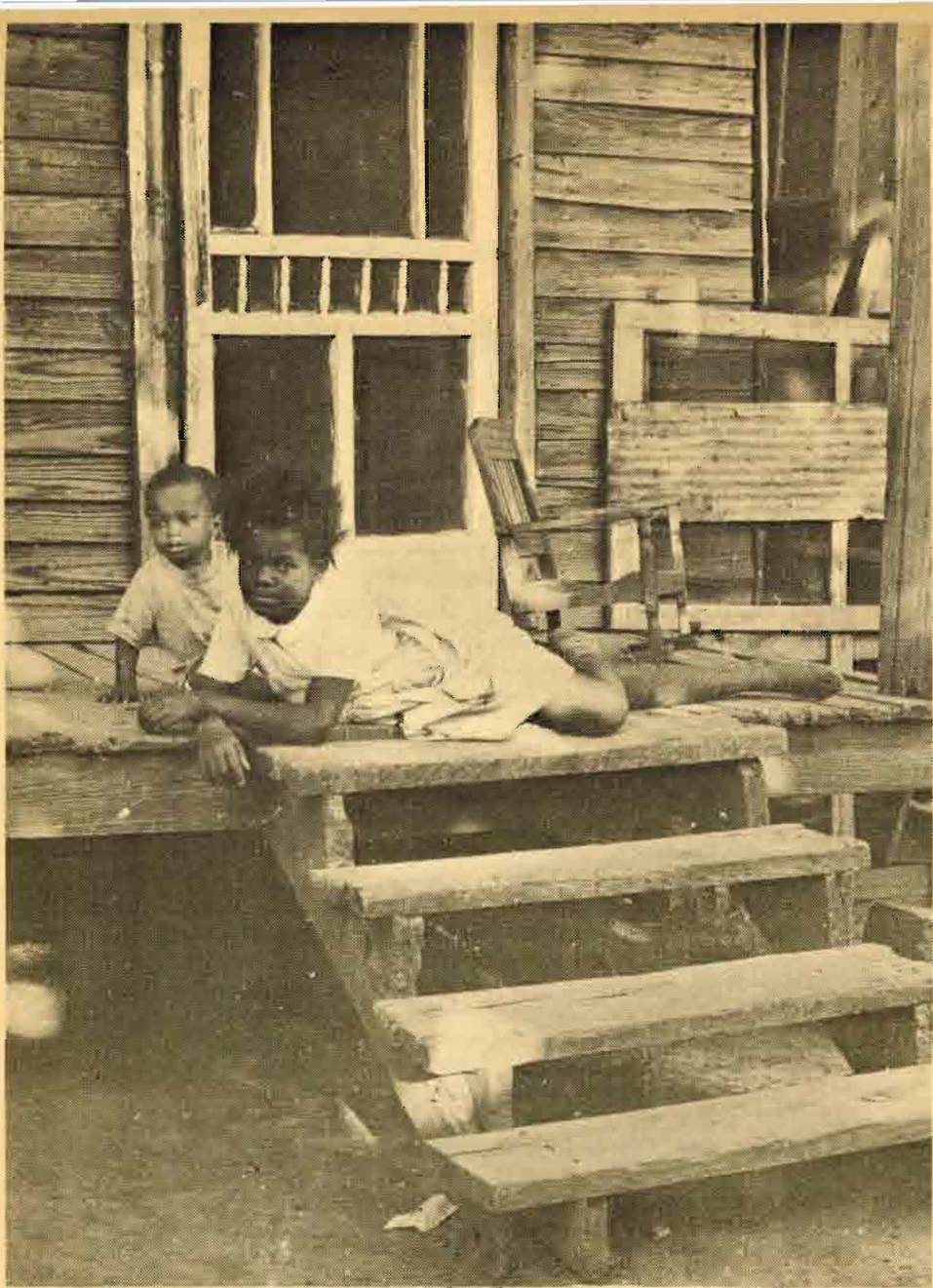
The reason Berman Gibson has been called "Communist" is because he is a union man. He believes a man should be paid a decent wage. Why can't they prove he is a Communist? The reason is because he is an old country boy, raised in Knott County, Kentucky. He believes every man should have his freedom. Where do they get this propaganda? It's just their evil minds. They are trying to hurt our organization, but we have enough common sense to know why they spread such filth. It is time for some of the white collar men to wake up. We poorly educated have been ignorant long enough. We're wise to most politicians.

They want us to stay where we are now. All they want of us is to go to the polls on election day and vote their way. We're tired of promises, we don't want promises, we want action. I would like to know how many people in office have tried to help the laboring man, I don't mean food stamps.

What we want is jobs, and jobs that will pay a decent wage. It's a disgrace for a man to work all week and then have to buy the food stamps so he can eat.

Some men are being trained today. What will they work at when they are trained? Will they go to some other state to make money and spend it there? We need jobs here so when we make money, our state and county will prosper, not some other state. We will always be in poverty on \$1.25 an hour and food stamps. We know this helps the people now, but this can't go on forever. If the food stamps should stop this day, people would be starving. We haven't gotten anywhere toward the work we need." RACHEAL BREWER

--Reprinted from "Voice for Jobs and Justice" (See PEOPLE'S PAPERS column this issue). The Appalachian Committee for Full Employment is active in eastern Kentucky, where coal miners, led by Mr. Berman Gibson, have been on strike for several years.



THE FRONT STOOP of a family in West Helena, Arkansas. Photo by D. Shaw.

## PERSONAL REPORT FROM THE ARKANSAS PROJECT HARD WORK ON MANY ISSUES

SPECIAL TO THE MOVEMENT

WEST HELENA --I arrived in West Helena on Thursday June 10, 1965 about 2 p.m. in the afternoon. After a short period of getting acquainted, I took off with another worker to do some voter registration canvassing. While I was visiting people to talk with them about registering to vote, I got some first impressions of the city of West Helena. The street we worked on was unpaved. The houses were mostly unpainted three room shacks, with 8 or more people living in them. A large ditch running along the side of the road separated the "side-walk" from the "street". It was very hot so most of the people who were home were sitting on their porches. There was dearth of shade trees and no grass at all.

### No Poll tax-- but fear

Negroes in Arkansas have been able to register and vote as long as they paid a one dollar poll tax. Many of the people I met that day have never been registered, however. We seemed to frighten some people, especially the older ones. Others told us they hadn't registered before because they had not been able to afford the poll tax. A few seemed uninterested and our explanations of the new law did not seem to make a difference.

In November 1964 the Arkansas electorate voted to end the poll tax. A dollar does not seem to be much to have to pay to register, but the more I talked to people, the more I could see how prohibitive the poll tax has been. In order to register in the past the people have had to go to the sheriff's office. Now voter registration takes place at the office of the county clerk in the court house.

Many people we spoke with seemed visibly relieved to learn they do not have to go to the sheriff's office to register. In spite of the ease, (compared to Mississippi) people are worried and frightened about going down to register. People are concerned about their jobs, their homes and the welfare of their children. They know that a woman in the community was forced to move because she and her family had been friendly to a white SNCC worker this spring.

The Westside Voter's League, our sponsors here in West Helena, are becoming more and more effective. Local people who aren't afraid to take stands for what they believe and who work to

make it possible for SNCC to be here find a vehicle in the activities of the league. The Voter's League sponsored a Freedom Day about two weeks ago during which members used their cars to take people to the court house so they could register. They also went from door to door to encourage people to go out to register. The League sponsors our community center, taking an active part in helping us work out problems like how to get shelves for the center library, distributing clothing from the north and making arrangements with the city government for use of vacant property as a playground. A special committee meets once a week to work out some of these problems.

The Westside Voter's League has initiated conversations with the mayor of West Helena about some of the problems that exist in the community. Groups have spoken to the mayor about the need for more outdoor recreational areas for the Negro people, Negro policemen in the community and equal job opportunity. A committee is now planning to contact individual businessmen in the community about making more jobs available to us on an equal basis.

We turn to the Voter's League for help in raising bail money, for help to furnish the house we rented and for places to put up people who visit the project when there is no more space in the Freedom House. This Sunday the Westside Voter's League is giving a Family Feast in honor of all the SNCC workers in the state. We are expecting about 40 workers in town and Jim Jones, the SNCC Project Director, will be giving a talk.

### Active community center

I've spent a good bit of time helping to organize and run the Community Center. We have four people working in the center; three full time and I am in and out now that our schedule has been settled. We spent the first two weeks getting the feel of what a center meant in this community. We registered over 100 children by the end of the first week. Programs are now running for children and adults.

The five to seven year olds come to the center each morning. Children from 8 to 11 and teenagers have friendship clubs. Classes in Negro History, arithmetic, Arkansas Politics and arts and crafts are held for children and teenagers.

### Watched whites leave

Our teenagers are a great group. They run the program for the five to seven year olds in the mornings, taking responsibility for planning activities with the children and carrying them out. The teenagers are also our militants. When one of their group was asked to go to the rear door of a restaurant to be served, they decided that a group needed to go and test the place --WE WERE SERVED. Next we went to the local "private club" swimming pool. We didn't get in, but we did have a great time watching all of the white folks leave when they closed the pool because we were there. The adults in the Westside Voter's League are following through on the pool business with complaints and negotiations in the city of Helena. Next the teenagers are planning to go to the movie in town that seats us upstairs and the white folks downstairs.

Adult programs at the center include classes in reading and writing, arithmetic, Arkansas politics and Negro History. I am teaching Negro History. We spend about half of our period talking. The concerns of the group seem to grow out of the lesson and at the same time are the cause of what we are studying. At the last session, one lady said that she saw no difference in the "Freedom of Choice" school integration plan and the methodical way African families were split when they were first brought to this country.

The "Freedom of Choice" plan means that Negro children of this county in the 1st, 4th, 7th and 10th grades can choose to go to the white school this fall. Because the Negro school is so inadequate the people realize there really is no choice.

They have written letters of protest individually and the Westside Voter's League has sent a petition to the Office of Education in Washington, D.C. to protest the plan. In the discussion it was brought out that the way the plan has been set up it could actually serve to discourage the children from making the transfer to the white school because there would be so few Negroes in the completely new and hostile environment of the white school.

### Singing and talking

Two exciting programs at the center are group singing and discussions. The children really are a singing group. It happens that two of us have guitars and that makes for

great fun leading songs. Discussions are more difficult. People are used to saying what they think will be approved of. They tend to shy away from things that are controversial or call for a personal opinion that needs to be backed up. Many feel that if one cannot say something good, he shouldn't say anything at all. This attitude is very obvious in the children and they are surprised and pleased to get the feeling that you really want to hear what they think. Once they can feel that though -- they can begin to talk.

The adults are much more cautious and it is not difficult to see the worry on their faces. There are people in the community who carry information over to the White Town and in a couple of instances people have been intimidated as a result. A local school teacher was recently advised by a member of the department of education to stay away from meetings of the Westside Voter's League. In any case, our smaller meetings are the most productive. People get a chance to practice hearing themselves and get to know that their ideas are good ones which are helpful to others as well. Already the people who talk in the smaller discussions are feeling freer about saying what they think in the meetings of the Westside Voter's League.

MYRTLE GLASGOW



GOULD FREEDOM CENTER near Pine Bluff. Photo by Ben Grinage.

# The Pioneering Days Are Over -

# Freedom Is Still Ahead

NANCY AND GENE TURITZ

SPECIAL TO THE MOVEMENT

BATESVILLE, MISS. -- In many ways Panola County is like Mississippi itself. Located in the northwestern area of the state, this county of 35,000 combines both rolling hills where small independent Negro farmers have their land and the flat rich plantation land of the Delta where the white man rules. Only sixty miles from Memphis, Tennessee, the county seat of Batesville (pop. 3,500) is built around a square where farmers come to sell watermelon, tomatoes, and beans. Cotton, soy beans, and potatoes are the big crops here. Agriculture involves almost everyone.

Batesville has some industry -- an aluminum plant, a corset factory, a hosiery plant, yet very few Negroes hold anything but janitorial jobs. Seventeen women applied for jobs at the corset factory, and one has received word that she may have a job when a new section of the building is completed. It is noticeable that the population is either young or very old. Batesville is on the train line and the road to St. Louis, Detroit and Chicago. Young adults do not stay here permanently, but often travel North and then South -- things are not much better elsewhere.

Life in Panola County centers around agriculture and the church. Sundays and often weekday evenings are spent singing and praying. The church gives strength to many who have joined the Movement. Biblical texts and the gospel of non-violence are often synonymous, but there are those who say, "I'm on my knees praying with a gun by my side." Humility, submission, patience and the idea that God can do it all are familiar in the sermon of the Negro preacher. It is he and his deacons who refuse to allow mass meetings, who nod "All right" when registration is mentioned, and then admit that they themselves would not go down to the court house. Says a Negro man, "We have a singin' shoutin' religion, and we loves it."

## Voters League began it

The Movement (Summer Project Volunteers) came to Panola County on June 21, 1964 -- the day the three civil rights workers were reported missing. Since 1959 there had been a Voter's League in the county. Organized by independent farmers and a few ministers, the League antagonized members of the community, both black and white, who feared change. Of its leaders, two left the county, Reverend Ferguson was dismissed from his church by an angry congregation, Mr. Kuykendall moved North in 1962 after his house was shot into, a cross burned on his property, and his twelve year old daughter -- accused of stealing a candy bar -- had been beaten so badly that she was hospitalized.

Among the first leaders of the League still active today are: Mr. Robert J. Miles, an independent farmer, now president of the marketing cooperative, county FDP chairman, and perhaps Panola County's most revered freedom fighter; the Reverend W.G. Middleton, now 87 years old and president of the Voter's League whose bullet-riddled Jeep -- the red necks do not spare men of God -- carries him to every meeting in the county; Mr. C.J. Williams who eloquently expresses his own ideas and the philosophy he has learned from the Movement. Introducing summer volunteers in church, he says, "We were all in jail together in Jackson, black and white, and not one got out until all could get out. These people," he says, referring to us, "are not here to help you, but because they know that they are not free until you are free." The League initiated the first successful voter registration case -- United States vs. Jukes (1962). On May 28, 1964 an injunction against the registrar was initiated paving the way for the voter registration campaign of last summer.

Because there had always been people thinking, talking and acting in Panola County, the Movement caught on rapidly. The county is now one of the most advanced in the state of Mississippi. It has active Voter Leagues in three towns, a county-wide FDP which meets every other week, freedom school which continues even when there are no civil rights workers in the

county, a marketing cooperative now selling its first crop of okra, and a Freedom Labor Union. This summer Operation Headstart, a pre-school program administered by Mr. Robert Miles through the Child Development Group of Mississippi competes with the segregated Headstart programs administered by the county government. (The Poverty Program, of which Headstart is part, is supporting segregated schools -- there are a Negro and a White pre-school in Batesville, besides ours.) This summer has also brought literacy classes, the possibility of a Maid's Union, and a parents' group to talk about education and to desegregate grades 1-4 this Fall.

## What is freedom?

Panola presents possibilities for what can develop in Mississippi, yet it also presents tremendous problems. When the dangerous work is over, when the people want freedom, when civil rights workers and meetings are no longer a novelty, we must face the reality of economics in Mississippi and in the United States. When people can register, they must ask themselves what they have registered for. They must ask why they have a labor union; why they want to desegregate the schools. Must they, like Lawrence Guyot, head of the FDP, demand income, not jobs?

Usually there are no answers. Many of the early SNCC workers have left Mississippi for the unopened counties of Alabama, Arkansas and Louisiana. They refuse to face such questions. The people who live on the plantations face some of the most serious problems. They, like poor people all over this country, have no place to go, and few ways of making their situation known. This is certainly the most discouraging problem in Panola county, and one that cannot be presented in theory. Each person has his own story, his own struggle, and his own unanswerable questions.

Throughout the Delta area, plantation owners terrorize and intimidate the people who live on their land. Two investigators from the Justice Department were run off the Fred Taylor Junior Plantation in May when they stopped to talk to Mrs. Rodgers, a woman who lives there with her twelve children. Mrs. Rodgers has registered to vote even though she expects to be evicted any day. She has refused to let her children work. Her brother-in-law was just released on \$1,000 bond after having spent a year in Parchman, the state penitentiary. He became active in the Movement, registered and was jailed on a trumped-up charge of perjury because he had once been convicted falsely of selling liquor. (The conviction came at the time he joined the Movement.) Mrs. Rodgers wrote an affidavit for a recent minimum wage hearing of House Committee on Labor and Public Welfare. The last sentence of her testimony was, "Living in Mississippi is like living in a penitentiary." Her youngest children cannot read or write because she has had no money for their clothes or school lunches.

## Cotton Slaves

In the southwestern corner of the county, plantation owners are not as wealthy as Fred Taylor and are therefore more threatened by the Movement. On nights of mass meetings, road blocks have been set up to stop those returning home. Several men have been beaten. Civil rights workers visit the town of Curtis and the towns that surround it at night, and then with caution. Two workers were arrested for trespassing last year, and the plantation owner who made the arrest contemplated throwing them in the Tallahatchie River, but decided on the Batesville Jail.

One man came into town to tell us a story which we have not yet been able to verify. It seems that about a month and a half ago a woman was sent to Parchman by her boss for writing a bad check. This plantation owner now has guards around her shack day and

night, and is keeping her children as prisoners until they work off the debt. At the same hearing for which Mrs. Rodgers wrote her affidavit, James Roosevelt exclaimed in surprise, "Do you mean this is what it takes to grow cotton -- that it takes slavery?"

On the Hays Brothers and Hall Plantation, the situation is slightly different. Mr. Hays who testified in the depositions taken here during the winter said that he did not mind if his people registered, yet he too has intimidated those people who are strongest in the Movement. Long before the beginning of the strike in Shaw, Mr. and Mrs. Roland Nelson, Mr. Ellis Berry, Mr. Charles Moore and several others decided to present Mr. Hays with a petition protesting conditions on his place -- this without the suggestion of any outsider. The demands were simple:

TO MR. CARLTON C. HAYS: WE THE UNDERSIGNED TENANTS OF YOUR PLANTATION, DEMAND THAT YOU TAKE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING REQUESTS IMMEDIATELY:

That seed tickets be issued for all cotton ginned. Since mules were formerly furnished to us at no cost, you should now furnish us with tractors at no cost.

That we work an 8 hour day at \$1.25 an hour, with time and a half for overtime. (Present hours about 12 a day; wages \$3.00)

That we be paid for our work each Saturday at 12:00 noon. (Mr. Hays pays his tenants Saturday night so that they are unable to buy food for the week on Saturday afternoon, their only free time.)

That settlement be by compress weights and that we receive records from the compress. (Plantation owners keep all records, and tenants get none so that they are paid or owe at the bossman's whim.)

That you repair all houses so that they are sealed against the cold and have screens, indoor plumbing, and running water. (Sharecroppers' shacks have none of these things. It snows in Mississippi in the winter.)

That you supply fertilizer to us at no cost.

That the interest on money borrowed from you be 6%. (There is no work all winter so the tenant must borrow against payment for future work.)

The petition was signed by about half of the adults on the place -- approximately 50. The only demand met was a reduction of interest from 10% to 6%.

## "You ain't worth \$1.25"

Mr. Nelson reports that in a meeting with Mr. Hays about minimum wage, Mr. Hays said, "Ain't a man on this place worth \$1.25 an hour," to which Mr. Nelson replied, "Don't you call yourself a man, and don't you work on the place?" Mr. Nelson was not given any work from January 1 when the petition was submitted until June when Mr. Hays suddenly asked him to work as a tractor driver at \$8.00 a day, \$3.00 more than anyone else is paid. Mr. Nelson knows that Mr. Hays would like to buy him off; he says that he has to watch the bossman more carefully now.

## Automation : Real Threat

After this experience on the Hays Plantation, a Freedom Labor Union was organized. The men have talked seriously of a strike and are not afraid because things could not be much worse. But when they talk about beating up tractor drivers, burning cotton fields, or slashing the tires of the trucks which haul people to the fields, they admit that none of these acts will make a dent in the power of the plantation owner. He is prepared to automate more quickly if his Negroes demand a living wage. There are already chemicals and weed killers which will do the job more efficiently and less expensively than human labor even at the wage paid now. The bossman says he keeps his people on the land just as a favor; he doesn't need them; it's only tradition. Plantation people know that the threat is real.



## Conditions Desperate

At the last meeting of the Freedom Labor Union held at Black's Chapel on the Hays Plantation, it was decided that meetings should be held every other week rather than every Friday evening. While the strike in Shaw continues, there are no plans here. In Shaw, wages were suddenly lowered to \$1.75 a day putting people in a desperate and frightening situation. Their anger provided impetus. The strike began among day laborers who live in the towns where intimidation, violence and the possibility of losing one's home is not as immediate a threat. Yet even now since the strike has begun, there is great question as to its ultimate effectiveness. Like the plantation people in Panola, these people know that their only hope is to leave the cotton field, but they also have nowhere to go.

To what do these people look forward? Each year they work less and less. Less chopping, less picking. They are soon going to be unemployed. Their problems are the same as those of the unemployed in the North. How can they strike? How can they damage the bossman financially so he will come to terms? Is their only future a welfare dole in a Northern city? Here welfare is not given to Movement people. They attend meetings until 11:30 PM after getting up at 4:00 and working in the fields until 6:30 or 7:00 PM. They know there has got to be some course of action for them.

As civil rights workers, we are now no longer leaders. We can no longer ask the questions that start people thinking, and to which we have possible answers. We and they know that everyone should leave the plantations, but together we ask how.

For the independent farmer in Panola County, the situation is less depressing although the price of cotton does decrease yearly, and men are forced to find new crops. For someone to be called an independent farmer is to say that he is free from foreman, overseer, and bossmen. He

continued on last page



THREE MEMBERS of the MFLU, on strike for better pay and working conditions.

*The people in the South are like seeds, each with the potential to grow and spread more seeds, for more growth: creating gardens and forests of themselves -- lawns of living. They are planted in their lives.*

MRS. FANNIE LOU HAMER GREW UP as a black sharecropper on a plantation in Sunflower County, Mississippi. Around her and binding her, were the structures of a county-state-country that restricted (from a shotgun blast to deprivation of material needs to exclusion from its institutions) her functioning as a free person. Everything that controlled her life operated without involving her, beyond mandating acceptance as law, "our way of life." The reality of her life was and is, that there was no way for her to live a life within this governing structure that she could define, without an understanding of how to manipulate the structure to operate for her benefit. Which really means speaking the language, and knowing the procedure of the structure, in order to be able to claw to the necessary positions for manipulation.

AND STILL IF IT WAS TO MEET ALL of her needs, she must be in a position on top (a responsible position, which means to learn and accept the already defined qualifications necessary for that position) running the operation of it, which means the control and exclusion of most people, geared to the maintenance of the people on top. Most of us are trapped like she was, caught between varying forms of overt and latent oppression, stemming from the same restrictions.

HOWEVER, WHAT MRS. HAMER HAS begun to do, is grow her own life. What people must understand about this growth is that the roots of this growth are not in the "political realities" (for she was pushed out of that into a cotton patch) which "you people" are told they have to understand in order to make use of "democratic process." The energy for her growing comes not from the artificial, vaguely



By Charlie Cobb

understood, and certainly diffused sunlight of "our American way of life" (which can be equated in hypocrisy and oppression with "our Mississippi way of life"), but from the thousands of excluded and oppressed like herself, who see in her growth a fertility which they themselves can achieve -- seeds that they are qualified to plant and grow -- their lives.

CENTRAL TO MRS. HAMER'S PROB-

lems as a black Mississippi sharecropper was that she could never live her life decently (in whatever way she defines this -- from a house with adequate plumbing, to being judged on her own merits). A decent life has been denied her in every possibility of the word. Perhaps if we trace back and try and catch a glimpse of what her life was (and still is for those like her) we can begin to understand what she is growing herself to be.

MOSTLY, HER LIFE WASN'T HERS. It belonged to the plantation owner for whom she picked, planted, and chopped

cotton at the rate of three dollars a day. It belonged to the cop who whipped heads "to keep the niggers in line" for the white folks interested only in maintaining their "way of life." Her life was defined by ways and means of survival in a system that punished (in fact destroyed) "smart niggers" outside of it, who sought to participate in it. She was locked out of any way of moving up to run things. That was "white folks business" and blacks in Mississippi "don't mess with that." The penalties are too severe, ranging from economic reprisal to assassination.

GIVEN THIS LOCK-OUT FROM PARTICIPATION in the way her life is shaped and run, the meager material support for living, and the daily pressure of being black in Mississippi, one finds oneself wondering why she didn't shrivel up and waste away. The key to this survival seems to lie in her ability to draw on things that the system has not absorbed. There are at least two things:

That part of herself that she would like to be, but can't even hint at to the system for fear of destruction. The Forum she has found where she can be that part of herself. What she taps from other people like herself who are also locked out -- the countless undefined ways they sustain each other from day to day

The fact that she couldn't learn the system, and could therefore only learn herself. She is free to build on what she understands, and continuously reshape what she builds based on this understanding. Shape and reshape without threatening herself.

IT BECOMES IMPORTANT FOR US TO understand how Mrs. Hamer is beginning to act on her realization that she isn't /doesn't have to be bound by what the system designates her as, and commands her to be responsible to. Her rejection of these designations makes her a weed; a threat to the harmony and continuity of a carefully trimmed lawn. She is the crabgrass on this lawn.

SO IN ATLANTIC CITY, SHE DISCOVERED that "political realities" were not for people, and that she certainly couldn't use them to get what she wanted. The politics that operate in this country could not accept her particular political weed. For, like crabgrass, if not uprooted, it carries the potential of taking over the whole lawn.

## AGAINST

## "Legal De Facto Segregation"

*The Dirksen Amendment has been defeated. The issues surrounding it are still significant, as explained in this commentary by ACLU representative Coleman Blease.*

The issue has been joined! After months of behind-the-scenes battles and weeks of hearings, the United States Senate is about to vote (perhaps has, by the time this reaches print) on the Dirksen Amendment. The vote will come on a motion by Senator Everett Dirksen to amend the substance of his constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court's one man, one vote decisions into another resolution already on the Senate floor. Dirksen was forced to this stratagem after the civil rights lobby blocked the passage of his drastic proposal in the Senate Judiciary Committee. By his latest move, Dirksen hopes to by-pass the Judiciary Committee completely. His strategy requires two steps; first, a majority vote to substitute his constitutional amendment for the resolution now on the floor; second, if successful, a two-thirds vote for passage. The measure would then go to the House.

The civil-rights lobby, composed of various members of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights -- the AFL-CIO, ACLU, NAACP, CORE, AJC, ADA and many others, sees the upcoming Senate vote (or votes) as the crucial test of Dirksen's efforts to return state government to the rule of vested interest, including the vested racial interests of the South. The vote is expected to be very close. It is imperative that, among others, Senator Kuchel be reached immediately by letter or wire.

### Political fear

Senator Kuchel represents the dilemma of many Republicans who have voted for civil rights legislation. The Republican Party is opposed to the one man, one vote decisions because of the fear (whether right or wrong) that it would lose many legislative bodies to urban-based Democrats. Senator Kuchel, co-authored the Dirksen Amendment along with every other Senate Republican, save Clifford Case of New Jersey. But, like Senator Jacob Javits of New York, he has had second thoughts.

Javits, who had introduced a reapportionment amendment remarkably similar to the Dirksen Amendment, provided the key vote in preventing the Dirksen Amendment from passing the Senate Judiciary Committee. Javits' way out of the dilemma was to propose unacceptable (to Dirksen) amendments which would bar racial discrimination and require that any non-population apportionment bear "a reasonable relation to the needs of the state."

Kuchel would appear to hold similar views, judging from his public testimony on the one man, one vote issue. Senator Kuchel testified before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments that any constitutional amendment on reapportionment "must, of course, continue to be subject to judicial review... as to reasonableness and as to fidelity with constitutional guarantees." Moreover, Kuchel suggested that the amendment should not be ratified by malapportioned legislatures (rather by the people) and should contain some provisions to allow the people a means of initiating the apportionment process via a constitutionally-provided initiative process. None of these features are in (or foreseeably will be in) the Dirksen Amendment. Kuchel, consistent with these views, should vote against the Dirksen Amendment.

### Minority power

There is a root cause to the political problems of Senators Kuchel and Javits. It is not clearly seen by virtually all in the civil rights movement that voting equality is essential to avoid de facto discrimination in voting. As Senator Paul Douglas put it, "districting by area can easily be used as a vehicle to deny effective representation to racial or religious groups which tend to live in segregated areas."

Segregated communities produce not only de facto discrimination in school and other public services, but de facto political segre-

gation as well. The Negro vote is heavily concentrated in urban areas. A devaluation of the urban vote, which is the only thing contemplated by the Dirksen Amendment must therefore be a devaluation of the Negro and the ethnic vote. Thus, though it may seem paradoxical, majority rule means increased (ethnic) minority influence. For the ethnic voting power will be increased by getting its equal share of the vote.

Three last points should be made. First, the Dirksen Amendment, as it is now phrased, provides that "The people of a State may apportion one house of a bicameral legislature upon the basis of factors other than population..." Because this provision amends, and thus overrides, other conflicting provisions of the Constitution, it can be read to allow a deliberate and purposeful racial discrimination in apportionment in violation of the Fifteenth Amendment (as now construed by the courts) only prohibits purposeful racial discrimination. Thus, even if the Dirksen Amendment were amended to make it specifically subject to the Fifteenth Amendment (which Dirksen has repeatedly refused to do), it would not prevent the effective dilution and devaluation of the urban-based ethnic vote.

Lastly, Senator Dirksen has suggested that he might amend his proposal to permit the people to apportion one house on the basis of "geography" or "political subdivision." A moment's reflection should convince one that this also would not prevent the basic evil of de facto discrimination. It should be remembered that Georgia used political subdivisions (counties) as the basis for effecting a political segregation of the races not only in its state legislature but for state wide races as well. Only when this basis was overturned by court order in the lower house of the Georgia legislature did Negroes get elected to that body.

## PEOPLE'S PAPERS

*(A monthly listing of newspapers and publications put out by community and grass-roots organizations.)*

### el malcriado

Newspaper of the Farm Workers Association, Box 894, Delano, California. Written in Spanish. 16 pages. Militant voice of farmworkers. \$2. a year.

### west tennessee freedom press

Box 277, Somerville, Tennessee. Newsletter of West Tennessee Voters Project, 4 pages mimeoed. News from Fayette County (poorest in the South). Contributions.

### voice for jobs & justice

Published by the Appalachian Committee for Full Employment, 501 High St., Hazard, Kentucky. News of the striking coalminers, Appalachian poverty program, living conditions. Published weekly. Contributions.

### fillmore stand!

Published by Freedom House, 1258 Fillmore St., San Francisco, California. News on poverty program, housing/tenant union, police brutality. \$1.50 a year.

### arkansas voice

Arkansas Freedom movement. 4 pages mimeo. Written by local people and SNCC staff. SNCC, 700 West 9th St., Little Rock. Contributions.

### WE NEED VOLUNTEERS

The SNCC Regional Office in San Francisco needs office personnel. If you can offer your services, please call 626-4577.



HOME COOLING SYSTEM - You can't live in the Linnell shacks during the day. The temperature reaches 130 degrees inside. Photo by George Ballis.

speaking labor union that has been very active in the area), from the Migrant Ministry (an off-shoot of the California Council of Churches that works with the farm workers similar to the manner in which the Delta Ministry has been working with striking farm workers in the Mississippi Delta area), from Citizens for Farm Labor (a Berkeley based organization) and from the American Friends Service Committee. Supporters from all over California were present for the march.

Houses in the two camps are one room huts -- some would call them shacks -- that were built by W.P.A. in 1930 as a temporary measure and are still in use. The huts are made of metal and have no solid



TWO FARM WORKERS in the Linnell Labor Camp discuss conditions with SNCC field secretary. Photo by Brooks Penney.

doors and no solid windows, are occupied the year around and have no indoor plumbing or sewage. Water is carried in five gallon jugs from a common hydrant that services six or seven huts at once, and the bathing and toilet facilities are communal. There is one toilet house for each 60 units of housing.

One marcher talked about life in the camps: "The cabins are not good. They are heavy metal and they are much too hot. The weather is about a hundred outside and it's about 130 or 150 inside. We can't stay inside. We have to cook -- make lunch -- early in the morning, because after eight in the morning we can't get into the cabin. We have to cook supper after 8 or 7:30 at night because we can't cook during the daytime. It's much too hot.

"We don't have side walks and when it rains it's all muddy and we can't walk. We have to get the water about twenty or thirty feet far from our cabin -- not inside, outside, and the showers are pretty far. We have to go and take the showers all together; the toilets are not good either."

The Housing Authority has justified the rent raises on the grounds that the money is needed in fixing up the camps but the protesters contend that over the past ten years the Housing Commission, a non-profit organization by law, has accrued an excess profit of \$130,000. Among the marchers the opinion was unanimous that what the camp needed was not fixing but tearing down and rebuilding. One marcher talking about Ferris Sherman, executive director of Tulare County Housing Authority said, "I don't know what he is going to do to fix the camp, because it's not worth fixing. I think we just need a new camp."

### WHY THE RENT STRIKE IS IMPORTANT

One proposal of the rent strikers is that the camp be run on a more collective basis, giving the tenant council in the camp some real power. They also demand a complete investigation of the financial procedures and camp accounts.

Then rent raise hit the laborers very hard, as any change in balance upsets subsistence level incomes, but it has also become a more fundamental organizing force. Fragmentation of camp living has been overcome in the face of an oppressive and unnecessary rent raise.

Laborers see now that organization and concerted action is a prerequisite for change. An unwise administrative decision has reinforced the drive for labor organization and solidified some discontent over the conditions and handling of farm labor housing.

## How An Organizer Works SOME RAMBLING GUIDELINES FOR FREEDOM SCHOOL ORGANIZERS

You may not know it but if you work in Freedom Schools, you are also doing community organizing. The Northern Student Movement (NSM) started out as a tutorial project. So did the SDS-ERAP. SNCC's work started as a pilot voter registration project which was supposed to last one year.

What started as tutorials are now "autonomous organizations capable of being vehicles for effecting social change". What started as a pilot voter registration program has evolved into the most important grass roots social movement in this half of the 20th Century.

1. After moving in, go out in two's or three's and walk around the community, learn the ground you're going to work, check out the liquor stores, churches, slums, schools, middle income houses, new and old cars.
2. Talk to young people about freedom schools.
3. Use the existing structures as tools. Talk to mothers on welfare. Find out the nearest office of social welfare. Talk to the social workers to find out who on welfare has high school age students.
4. Talk to ministers, especially those with small churches. Ask their cooperation,

Sunday School classes provide very good atmospheres for Freedom Sunday School.

5. Find out where there are parks, playgrounds, and recreation centers where young people congregate.

6. Begin by talking to one or two young people about Freedom Schools, finding out what their interests are -- who draws well, who writes well, who plays piano or sings.

7. After getting two or three people together begin the school right where you are if possible. You don't have to announce it is a Freedom School -- just begin to question about the schools, community, police, whatever interests people.

8. Do not try to raise money within the community by giving dances. People who don't have money can be easily antagonized. If you work with high school students long enough, they will eventually want to give their own dances.

9. Discuss in nightly meetings all your successes and failures, little or big. Always question, always evaluate your work.

10. Stay in that community as much as possible every day.

11. Try to get a church to have a community meeting on freedom schools. Get local people to help leaflet and call.

12. Begin slowly to bring young people

## The Populist Party (Part 2)

The Populists, in the form of the People's Party, realized that one way to achieve their goals of changing 19th century American society was by gaining political power. They began as a third party movement, electing Populists to local and state offices. But they soon realized that they alone, as farmers of the west and south, could not change America without help from other people in the country. They were faced with the very same problem that concerns many of us in the civil rights movement today: how could they join with others who were also being hurt by the undemocratic political and economic control of America?

The Populists felt that the urban working man and the small farmer had the same enemies; the railroads that overcharged the farmer also broke the strikes of railroad workers who were fighting for a union. The same injustices facing the farmer struggling to survive in a nation of growing corporations and monopolies also confronted the mill worker in Massachusetts and the cigar maker in New York. How does the little man without a voice, asked the Populists, make himself heard over the rumble of the industrial machines of modern America?

### Labor: No Allies There

At first the People's Party tried to convince city workers to join with them. The dominant union in the late 19th century was the American Federation of Labor, headed by Samuel Gompers. The AFL was a craft union, organized to protect the interests of skilled workers only. Gompers was a cautious leader, who believed that labor should work on economic issues of wages and working hours, but not enter political struggles. He was opposed to unions that organized all the workers in an industry, including the unskilled. He had seen the problems of the old Knights of Labor, an industrial union that had grown weak, and believed that only skilled laborers could form a stable organization -- their labor was not replacable, and an employer could not find strike breakers who were as well-trained as the union members.

It was to the AFL that the Populists had to turn to get the help of organized labor. Gompers, as the leader of the AFL, was opposed to the farmers; the Populists were too radical in their demands, and too politically oriented for the craft unionist. Gompers, himself, was unable to stop rank and file support of the Populists, and in many instances members of the AFL joined with Populists in elections. But a formal coalition was impossible, and the Populists, without organized labor, were too isolated to even think of gaining national power.

### The Socialists disagreed

The American Labor movement was still young, and not at all sure how to organize and keep organized American workers. Was the answer to denounce radicalism, avoid multiple strikes, and to be non-political as Gompers advocated? Some agreed strongly with the AFL ideas. The Socialists

were as opposed to Gompers as they were to American capitalism. But the socialists were also split. Some of the socialists thought of the Populists as small land owners, not part of the working class, and therefore not part of the radical movement which they hoped would change America. The Populists had always fought big business, but many socialists, boxed in by classical revolutionary theories, saw the farmers as just another part of the bourgeoisie, and not an ally of the working man.

Many other socialists of the late 19th century rejected politics, much as the conservative trade unions did, although for different reasons. For example, the International Workers of the World (IWW) advocated syndicalist unionism, that is, workers seizing control of factories, with little thought of gaining political power.

The Populists had tried to ally with a labor movement that hardly existed. The AFL refused a Populist alliance because the farmers were too radical. The Socialists on the other hand could not break through their own conflicts and isolation long enough to see that the farmers were fighting the same enemies as the socialists. The Populists found themselves alone. They were unable to build the kind of coalition which they felt was necessary if they were to ever grow on a national scale.

### Into the Democratic Party

There was one alternative open to them, but it was an alternative which involved a great risk. They could exert enough influence to change it. In 1896 the Populists endorsed William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic nominee for President. The Republicans jumped on the chance to brand Bryan along with his Populist supporters, as eccentric radicals. The "silver interests" in the Democratic Party exploited the Populist demand for increased circulation of money, and soon the wide platform of the People's Party was narrowed to a fight over whether US money would have a gold or silver standard. When Bryan was defeated, the Populists lost their final chance.

The Populists were called inflationary, Bryan was called a mad man. The alternative to isolation, when building a coalition was impossible, had been fusion with the Democrats. The risk was clear, the chance was taken, and the Populists lost. Yet many Populist demands were eventually made part of the American establishment. The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party is not the Populist Party, nor is the labor movement today the same as it was in the 1890's. Youth on the left are no longer bound by the prejudices of the old socialist parties. Yet we should look at our history and find out what it tells us about today. Will we be isolated, or swallowed up? Or shall we try to build the kind of coalition that the Populists could not, in our fight to make America a democratic, integrated and truly free nation?

ELLEN ESTRIN

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JIMMY GARRETT

There's more and more talk, these days, that civil rights organizations need to snuggle up close to Lyndon's Labor organizations. This is known as the "coalition theory." The theory is that, if Negroes are to get what they want, being a minority of only 10% of the population, they're going to have to have allies.

When you look around for possible allies, you look for other elements of the population who have some of the same grievances that Negroes do. Right away, of course, you see that large numbers of whites don't get paid enough to live on (or can't find jobs at all), don't have decent places to live, can't feed their families, can't send their kids to college, etc.

In short, many whites need the same things that most Negroes need. Thus, theoretically, they ought to be the political allies of Negroes, so the two could work together, politically, to get what both want and need. The theory sounds pretty good, and we think that some such coalition is the only hope for either whites or Negroes.

But, from here, the "coalition theorists" go on to look around for something more. They want to find organizations with which civil rights groups can ally. Now, the fact is that poor whites who are the natural allies of Negroes don't have any organizations. So the coalitionists, instead of working to build the organizations among poor whites, focus on the labor organizations which already exist, and which have plenty of money. Of course, the labor organizations don't even pretend to represent anybody except their members who have jobs and can pay dues, and that representation is often more pretense than reality. But this crucial fact often gets lost in all the rhetoric of coalition.

The biggest and most powerful (with the most money, that is) labor organization is the AFL-CIO. Therefore, the coalitionists want to make an alliance with the AFL-CIO. As a matter of fact the alliance is already pretty far along.

Not long ago Bayard Rustin and some others set up what's called the A. Phillip Randolph Institute in New York. The purpose of the Institute is to mobilize the political strength of civil rights groups behind the AFL-CIO's fight to get Congress to repeal the part of the federal labor law which permits states to have laws that hinder the union organization. Another of the purposes of the Institute is to serve as an "ideological clearinghouse" for civil rights groups and to "train" civil rights workers and those who want to organize poor whites.

According to Rustin, the Institute now has \$80,000. It got \$50,000 from the AFL-CIO, and another \$30,000 from what Rustin describes as "personal friends". It may be that the Institute is just what the civil rights movement needs -- an adequately financed training institution in which civil rights workers and poor white organizers can learn what they need to know to be effective politically. On the other hand, some of the background facts -- such as the heavy dependence on the AFL-CIO funds -- need to be examined rather closely. We say this because of what we know about some of the other organizations which have been created and financed by the AFL-CIO.

## AFL-CIO- State Department

In 1962, an organization called the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) was set up. It grew out of a training school which was conducted in 1960 by an AFL-CIO affiliate (Communication Workers of America) and which was financed with money provided by the U.S. State Department. The training school was for Latin American labor unionists.

The State Department provided enough money not only to put the Latin Americans through the training course, but also to pay their salaries for nine months after they returned home. George Meany, President of the AFL-CIO worked with the State Department and the Communications Workers of America in setting up AIFLD. There was some trouble finding a person to head the new organization, because its money was to come from an outlet called the Michigan Fund. The Michigan Fund had already been identified as one of the channels the Central Intelligence Agency uses to put into the hands of those who will do its bidding in other countries. Finally an old gentleman named Serafina Romualdi was placed at its head. AIFLD was endowed with a special projects department, and at its helm was placed William C. Doherty, Jr., son of a former AFL-CIO vice president.

AIFLD "trains" Latin American unionists. It has 14 offices in Latin American countries. These offices have trained more than 20,000 union members in what AIFLD calls "trade union procedures". Some 300 of the more successful trainees have been brought to the AIFLD headquarters in Washington, D.C. for nine months' further training. This "elite" of Latin American union members get paid travel and living expenses while they're at the special training in Washington, D.C., and they are kept on the AIFLD payroll for nine months after they return to their countries.

One of the "special projects" of the AIFLD department headed by William C. Doherty seems to have been helping to organize and maintain the general strike in British

(Ed. note: for a fuller treatment of this subject, see Sid Lens, *Lovestone Diplomacy*, The Nation, July 5, 1965, from which much of this information was drawn.)

## MISSISSIPPI REPORT

continued from page 4

may contribute to the white economy as a consumer and producer, but his decisions are his own. It is the independent farmer in Panola who is benefiting from the marketing cooperative which this month sent its first bushels of okra to the open market in Memphis at 8¢ a lb. and Chicago at 18¢ a lb.

## Co-op Formed

The co-op began when disgruntled farmers demanded that Jacobs, the middleman here, pay them 8¢ a lb. instead of 4¢ a lb. for okra. Jacobs settled at 4 1/2 ¢, and the men refused to sell to him. With the help of a loan from Farm Home Administration (FHA), these men have now established themselves as a marketing cooperative. They are soon to receive farm machinery purchased with the loan -- two double row cotton pickers, two bean combines, two trucks with 15' beds, two cotton wagons and two pickup

trucks. The machines will be available to members farmers who will continue to receive 4 1/2 ¢ a lb. for okra, the balance of which is returned to provide capital for the co-op. The men purchased three acres of land to build sheds for their machinery, and are discussing the possibility of using an old school house as a community center which will provide other services. There is great need for specialists in agriculture and home economics. Workshops discuss the idea of "cooperation," which is difficult for a man who has been in competition with white men who expect him to have neither intelligence nor energy to manage in the business world. The co-op hopes to provide machinery, and a market for small farmers who alone can't raise capital for machines, or raise enough produce to trade in the large and lucrative markets of the North.

The co-op has not yet discussed its re-

sponsibility toward the plantation people who cannot benefit by their organization as it now exists. In Shaw, the independent farmers have donated land for "victory gardens" where the strikers are now growing food for themselves, and marketing some surplus. Perhaps the co-op here will be able to purchase land for families who can leave the cotton fields.

## Big Business Runs It

The board of trustees of AIFLD includes some persons who could hardly be supposed to be militant representatives of the interests of Latin American workers. The trustees include:

- J. Peter Grace -- President of W.R. Grace & Co. (which has sugar growing and refining, paper manufacturing, food processing and paint making operations in Peru, Chile, Columbia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Central America and Panama); director of First National City Bank of New York (with vast banking operations throughout Latin America); director of Kennecott Copper Co. (with large copper mining operations in Chile); director of Brazilian Traction Light and Power Co. (which produces and distributes about 50% of the electric power in Brazil and provides and operates about 80% of Brazilian telephones.)
- Berent Friele -- Vice president and director of International Basic Economy Corp., a Rockefeller Latin American operation.
- Charles Brinkerhoff -- Vice-chairman and director, Anaconda Co. (which owns the copper that Kennecott doesn't own in Chile); director of First National City Bank of New York; director of ACF Industries, Inc. (one of the larger armaments makers in the U.S.)
- Juan T. Trippe -- Chairman of Pan American World Airways (which operates the missile site at Cape Kennedy under contract with the U.S. Government and which owns, with W.R. Grace & Co., large shipping interests in Latin America); director of Chrysler Corp.
- Henry S. Woodbridge -- Chairman of True Temper Corp. (manufactures various kinds of tools and railroad equipment); director of International Power Co. (produces and distributes electric power in Bolivia, El Salvador, Mexico, and Venezuela.)
- William Hickey -- Chairman, executive committee, True Temper Corp.; Pres. of United Corp. (an investment fund with large utilities holdings); director of International Power Co.; director of Bolivia Power Co.
- Robert Charles Hill -- U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, 1957-1961; director, United Fruit Co. (which owns most of the banana and other fruit production in Central and South America; it was largely in United Fruit's interest that the CIA overthrew the Government of Guatemala in 1954, in order to restore the banana lands which the Arbenz government had taken from United Fruit); director of International Power; director of Merck & Co., whose former president, John T. Conner, is Lyndon's Secretary of Commerce; director of True Temper Corp.

Thus, the policy-making board of trustees of AIFLD includes some of the most powerful industrialists and financiers in the U.S., who are also large employers of Latin American workers.

The budget of AIFLD, according to its head man, Roumaldi, is about \$2 million per year. Of this, the AFL-CIO contributes 11%, business organizations (presumably the corporations represented on the AIFLD board) contribute 8.5% and the Agency for International Development (Lyndon's foreign aid agency which is actually an arm of American big business) contributes the rest.

What all this means, simply, is that the AFL-CIO makes a token contribution to the budget of AIFLD and that the rest of the money is supplied by big business. Unless AIFLD lives in a world different from the one we know, then big business and Lyndon are setting the policies for AIFLD, which, in turn means, that the AIFLD trainees are indoctrinated with what Lyndon and big business think they ought to know and believe, and then these "trainees" are sent back to Latin America and paid to serve as labor finks for big business and political finks for Lyndon.

With this kind of record on the AFL-CIO and its "coalitions", we think it would be advisable for any civil rights organization to consider everything very carefully before recruiting workers to be put through a training course financed and created by the AFL-CIO. Maybe the money was given to the A. Phillip Randolph Institute by the AFL-CIO, but who gave it to the union? And what did the AFL-CIO agree to do in return for the money? If AFL-CIO's record in AIFLD means anything at all, then it establishes that the greatest of our labor organizations is wholly capable of cooperating with the U.S. Government and with American corporations to sell out the workers it claims to represent.

Who won't it sell out, if the price is right?

JACK MINNIS

sponsibility toward the plantation people who cannot benefit by their organization as it now exists. In Shaw, the independent farmers have donated land for "victory gardens" where the strikers are now growing food for themselves, and marketing some surplus. Perhaps the co-op here will be able to purchase land for families who can leave the cotton fields.

## The Real History

Last night Adult Freedom School met for the first time in Batesville. They wanted a typing class, and there was a discussion of the history of Panola County. "Was the land here cleared when you came?" "Were there always plantations?" "How were the roads built?" We decided to begin to write the history of Panola County, a history different from the one written by the "white folks." Negroes cleared the land, built the roads. Negroes now live on the land and work it, yet it barely supports them while it makes the white man rich.

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