

# THE



# MOVEMENT

Published by  
The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee of California

# MISSISSIPPI CHALLENGE KILLED 228-143

On September 17, 1965 the challenge to unseat the white Congressmen from Mississippi was dismissed from the House of Representatives, by a vote of 228 to 143. The motion for dismissal, coming from the Chairman of the House Elections Subcommittee, did not mention any of the

real issues of the Challenge.

Instead the motion called for dismissal on "technical" grounds. The Mississippi Congressmen had valid certificates of election on file in the office of the Clerk of the House; they had taken the oath of office administered by the Speaker of the House.

Moreover, as the official report for dismissal complained, "The fact is that the contestants did not avail themselves of the proper legal steps to challenge their alleged exclusions from the registration books and ballots prior to election, nor did they even attempt to challenge the issuance of the Governor's certificate of election, in Federal District Court, after the election was held."

### Dodged the Issue

The Minority Report of the Elections subcommittee recommended that the Challenge be sent back to the subcommittee for more open hearings. As Congressman Hawkins from California said, "Mr. Speaker, the committee majority found that the primary question for them to consider was, 'Was there an election?' and it found out that there was.....Of course there was. No one has denied that. But the issue raised by this challenge is whether there was a valid, constitutional election and whether qualified citizens could avail themselves of the electoral and political processes of the state in which they live.....that is the question which the committee should more thoroughly consider."

Lawrence Guyot, Chairman of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, commented, "It was shocking to us that the vote taken...had little to do with the major issue we raised - did the state-endorsed disenfranchisement of more than 90% of the Negroes in Mississippi render the Congressional elections illegal? Was the Congress of the United States going to allow to sit among them men elected by a system of murder, terror and economic slavery? Rather than face those questions, Congress

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# STRIKE IN THE GRAPES!

DELANO, CALIFORNIA - The cry in the San Joaquin Valley north of Bakersfield, in the grape fields now at the peak of harvest time, is Huelgal Huelgal. It means Strike! in Spanish and is the cry of the roving picket lines of the independent National Farm Workers Association (FWA) and the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO (AWOC).

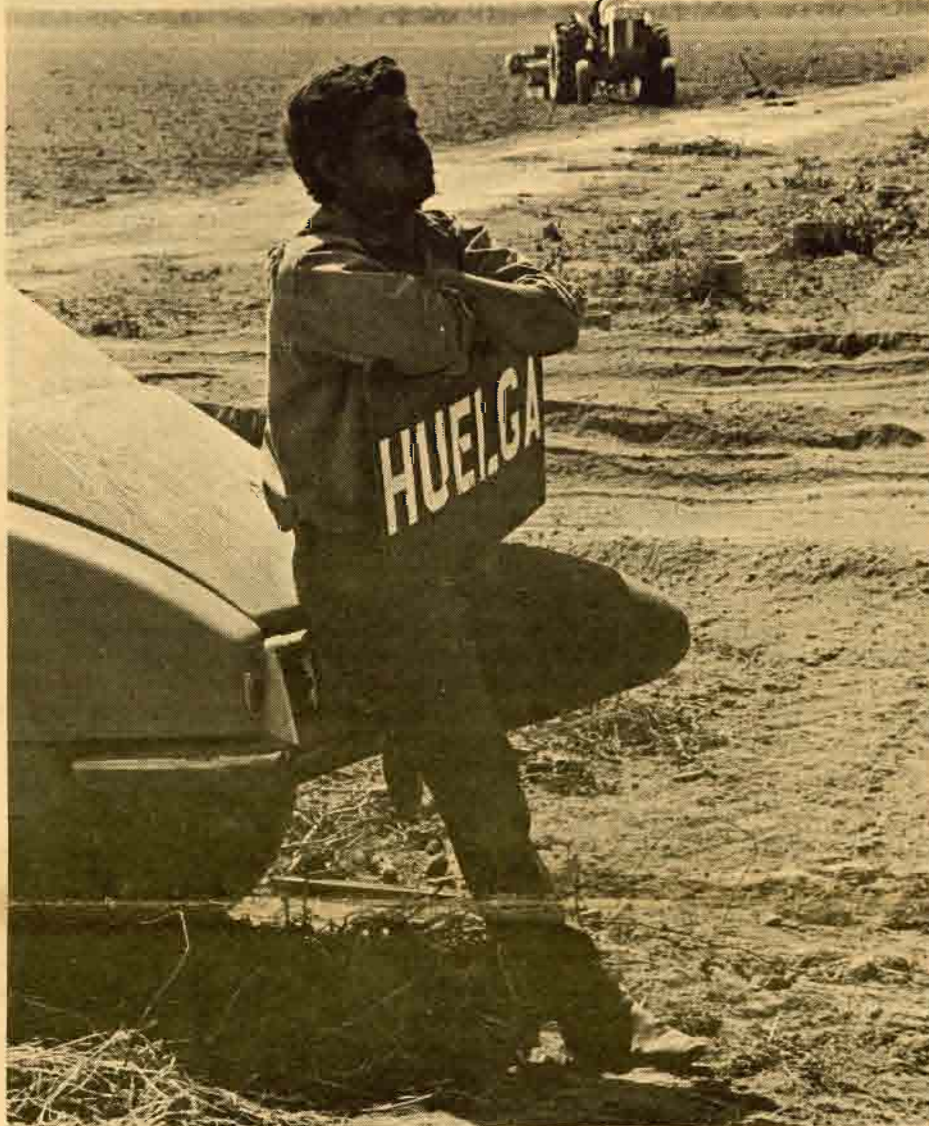
According to one source it is the largest strike of agricultural workers in the Valley since the Modesto cotton strike of 1938. For the growers it is a foreboding display of unity between the two organizations, which have not cooperated in this way before.

On Sunday, September 26, nearly 1000 farm workers marched in Delano. Gathering in a park before the march, the children ran races and broke pinatas filled with candy. Then the farm workers and their families marched through the residential section of Delano, carrying signs announcing the strike and shouting Huelgal and Viva la Causal.

Workers are asking \$1.40 an hour plus 25¢ a box. Before the strike began, the growers were paying \$1.15 and \$1.10 plus 10¢ a box. As more and more local workers have left the fields, the growers have boosted wages slightly in an attempt to recruit strikebreakers from outside the area.

The growers have also moved into the courts to obtain temporary restraining orders against "mass" picketing. One order, issued at the Lucas ranch, limits pickets to five and prohibits shouting. It is impossible for picketers to talk to scabs in the field without shouting.

In the face of severe pressures (for the story about harassment by police and growers see page 5), the strikers have stood firm. Each morning at 4 a.m. crews of pickets move out to find which fields



A PROUD STRIKER waits as grower's tractor driver comes around to lay down another boiling cloud of dust. Note thick layer of dust on back of car. Huelga means strike.

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## Carroll County, Mississippi

Carroll County, Mississippi is a bleak district in the South. It has:

- No industry
- No libraries
- No movie theaters
- No hospitals.

It is the 14th poorest county in the nation. None of its schools, white or black, are accredited. What does it have? In the words of one SNCC volunteer, Larry Gamble of Stockton, "it has cotton, a sheriff, a Klan, and a Freedom Democratic Party."

Out of this has come one of the best organized MFDP counties in Mississippi. The local people, tired of a split school session, split so that their children could go pick the white man's cotton, took to the streets and ended it.

The drive was begun by Mrs. Leola Blackmon, whose 8 year old son attends the Black Hawk school in Carroll County. She raised the question in an MFDP meeting. The local people decided to take action, at first with a petition. They got 230 signatures on the petition, but the school superintendant refused to halt the split session.

### School Boycott

The parents then decided to boycott the schools at the beginning of the Summer session. The first week of the boycott most of the children stayed out of school, but the schools remained open. Parents were afraid their children would be flunked, or they would be fined, or their welfare checks would be cut off. Children began to filter back into the summer session.

At a discussion at Jeff's Chapel on why

## "IT HAS A KLU KLUX KLAN, A SHERIFF, AND A MFDP"

the boycott had failed, someone suggested that the only way to close down the schools was to stop the buses, to block them with their bodies. The idea spread quickly: the buses would not run on Monday.

Monday morning attempts were made to block the school buses. At Black Hawk school, Mrs. Blackmon's 8 year old son was among them. As the Sheriff and his deputies began to clear them away, one of the deputies slapped the child. Mrs. Blackmon grappled with the deputy and was thrown to the ground by two men and choked. She was arrested and released on \$1000 bond. The doctor's examination showed her shoulder had been damaged.

But children at the Black Hawk school were walking out again. Monday afternoon a county-wide meeting was held and a march on the Negro school in Carrollton planned. They decided to try to block the buses again on Tuesday morning.

There was no need to block the buses the next day. The Superintendent had closed the schools. The split session was ended.

### The Gees

The whole county used to be owned by the Gee family, who still own most of the sharecroppers land and the banking interests. The Sheriff is the owner power figure, with large landholdings in nearby Leflore County.

The son, Clint Gee, dropped out of college recently and leased a service station. His favorite pastime is driving his 1965 Ford Mustang, which prominently displays a pistol on the dashboard and a rifle with scope in the back. He follows civil

rights workers around as they canvass, and has been getting bolder and bolder. His intimidation has kept many potential Negro voters from the polls.

The night before Larry Gamble left to return to California the FDP office was burned to the ground. All the registration rolls, the records, were lost.

"Most of the rednecks are cowards," says Larry, "but there are some - like the ex-sheriff - who if they decide to kill you will do it in broad daylight and looking straight at you. And they'll know they're doing it for Christ and Christian Civilization."

### No Luck With Poor Whites

Some attempts were made to organize in the poor white community. It was almost impossible for an integrated group to do this. Though the whites are making the same wages as the Negroes - in some places as low now as \$1.75 a day - they just won't work with Negroes. They believe everything they have been taught.

A typical poor white community in Carroll County is "Little Texas." During the Depression, the whites lynched, burned, and ran out the Negroes who owned the land in this section. They wanted their own territory and they got it. Larry was run out of Little Texas when he was recognized as an MFDP worker.

Was the FBI of any help to the civil rights workers? None. "When the office was burned, they did nothing. When the ex-Sheriff came into the MFDP office drunk, and threatened to kill the workers, the

FBI was snotty and did nothing. When 60 of us marched to end the split session, the FBI man was there for 5 minutes and then took off. They were completely worthless."

### The Challenge

Larry feels that state-wide coordination of the FDP is very weak. Where there are two offices, one for COFO and one for the MFDP, decision-making gets mixed up and there is considerable confusion. SNCC has taken steps to remedy this. Seven or eight of the old SNCC staff members, Jesse Harris, among them, have formed what is called "The Team." They travel from project to project in the state trying to coordinate and carry information from one to the other.

The challenge of the MFDP failed to capture the active attention of the FDP members in Carroll County, who were more interested in such local issues as the split session and integrating the schools. Before the office burned down, about 20 local people were planning to travel to Washington to lobby, but funds were then diverted to pay for a new office.

The staff felt it was necessary to develop consciousness in the local people of state and federal laws that affected them, as well as working on local issues. One such law, passed at the same time the Mississippi legislature was "liberalizing" their voting laws, required children not living with their parents to pay a prohibitive fee in order to attend school. This hit the Negro community severely; many parents have left their children with relatives while they seek work outside the county.



## On The Washington D.C. Challenge

I sat and watched while the Congress of the United States of America voted to dismiss the Challenge. I watched as the numbers grew higher. Then I got sick and had to leave.

I knew before I got to D.C. what would happen. But seeing the Congress of these United States play their political games with no thought or care for the life of a black Mississippian, it sickened me.

I left the Capitol building and went to where the silent watchers were waiting. I reported that Congress was in the process of dismissing the Challenge.

An awful dead feeling of complete despair, filled the air.

One of the girls, about 20, got hysterical. She screamed and cried, shook and wept. I tried to comfort her. She cried and wailed, "how can they do this to us?"

The chief police officer came over and asked me if he could do anything. I told him what he could do with his stick, his club, I told him what he could do with his 70 to 80 armed Boy Scouts that he needed for the silent Mississippi watchers who were trying to be the conscience of the Congress. I told him what he could tell the congressmen who could make a decision that could do this to this girl. And I told him to leave us alone, we could take care of our own.

A car drove up and took the girl away to the church to rest.

I looked around and saw I was not the only one crying.

Then the voting was over. People gather-

ed around the Congresswomen and other leaders. I listened while Mrs. Hamer got up, tears in her eyes, spoke. While Mrs. Grey, Mrs. Walker and others stood up, all with tears in their eyes.

But I could not look at them. I could not take my eyes off a young Mississippi woman sitting with her baby in her lap. I stood, watching the baby and listening to the words of sorrow.

Finally I turned to face, to stare at the great white Capitol building.

As I watched, I saw a big red-faced man standing on the steps to the Capitol. He was making funny gestures at us, waving and laughing. I started to walk through the crowd towards the steps. Before I could get there, some of my friends stopped me. They held me gently by the arms and let me watch the red-faced man. They knew me too well to let me go.

Finally the man went back in the Capitol. Finally our speakers got done speaking. Finally our people went home. Finally I was left alone, watching the Capitol.

I watched the Capitol for a while longer, until the stench rose in my nostrils from Capitol Hill. It rose like the smell of dead fish laying in the hot sun for ten days. When I could not stand the smell any longer I left.

I left the Hill and returned to my red-eyed people, returned to the church and the people to whom love is enough of a reason for any action.

By Lou King



"Who killed the Challenge?"  
"I," said the President.

### MISSISSIPPI CHALLENGE KILLED CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

found that we, the Negro citizens of Mississippi, did not have the legal authority to bring these questions to the floor."

#### Who Killed it?

The question of why the Challenge we lost and indeed not even debated in the house is not difficult to answer. Those who worked closely on the Challenge feel that the major force behind the gagging of debate was the President, Lyndon Baines Johnson. Johnson exerted pressure on all the Congressmen to drop the issue, claiming that the Voting Rights bill would take care of the problem in the future. Many Congressmen used the Voting Rights Bill as an excuse not to take a stand on the Challenge.

They claimed that discrimination in elections would be solved by the registration of Negro voters. The MFDP disagrees. There are only nine federal registrars in

#### WE NEED VOLUNTEERS

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

Mississippi, five of which were assigned in the last week of September. The MFDP is calling for registrars in every one of the 82 counties of Mississippi.

Without federal registrars Negroes cannot be registered. And even if the Voter Registration Act is enforced, it will not bring jobs to those fired for registering; it will not stop the terror and fear of reprisals in Mississippi.

#### MFDP Will Continue

"Our challenge to illegal representation is not ended. We will work for implementation of the voting rights act; we will run mass registration campaigns, and we will run candidates against all five congressmen and Senator Eastland in the 1966 elections."

The Challenge, even though lost, had positive results. The denial of civil rights in Mississippi was publicized throughout the country. Thousands of people in Northern California alone signed petitions urging the unseating of the white delegation.

The Challenge also exposed the problems the movement faces in confronting the fed-

eral government. One person who worked on the Challenge for many months put it this way, "The Congressmen have their own private club, they served on committees together, they owe each other favors. If a Congressman from the San Joaquin Valley is concerned with cotton farms in his area, and he sits on a committee with a Mississippi Congressman, he is going to worry about that man's vote on agricultural bills and not want to get in bad with him."

"The clique of law makers have loyalties to their colleagues which makes their relationship to their constituency secondary. The problem is how can we exert enough pressure on the politicians so that they listen to the people who elect them, and not the congressional in-crowd."

The "in-crowd" worked hard to see that the Challenge would not be debated on the floor. It is generally agreed that McCormack, Speaker of the House, was responsible for the delay in printing the depositions of the Mississippians who were refused the right to vote. The clerk who stalled on the printing was simply an employee of the House, not a policy maker. AS one Challenge worker in California put it,

"it adds up to a conspiracy to try to dump the Challenge."

There were some Congressmen who chose to respond to their constituents, and not Establishment pressure. Gubser, from the 10th Congressional District of California changed his vote on the Challenge in response to enormous public pressure. He stated, on the floor of the House, "I believe I am correct in saying that no other Congressional district outside the State of Mississippi is so intensely interested in matter as my own.....more than 2,000 miles away from the state of Mississippi ....Signed petitions, with hundreds of names, urging my support of the Challenge, have been sent to my office. The city council of my largest city passed a resolution with a unanimous vote urging my support of the move to unseat Mississippi's Congressmen."

As Gubser changed his position, because of the public pressure, so may other Congressmen in the years to come. The MFDP is going back to Mississippi to rebuild itself. The Challenge is not lost, only extended.

## FOR 200 YEARS WE'VE BEEN WORKING FOR NOTHING

### Mississippi Freedom Labor Union

"Everybody should be on strike because you are not getting anything for your work. Why work and be hungry when you can gain the union some support? All the people that have children really should be on strike, as well as the parents. Why make your child work for low wages when all of your life you have been working for nothing? Why buy the white man steak when you can't hardly eat neckbones? As cheap as

chicken is, you can't eat it but once a week on Sunday. Wake up and think. We as Negroes want to be equal and get high wages. For over two hundred years we have been working for nothing. Please join the union, because if you are not in a union, you just aren't anywhere. . ."

From a leaflet published by the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union

The first strike, held last spring by the



STRIKE CITY in Trippet

Mississippi Freedom Labor Union (MFLU) was not successful, state chairman George Shelton said, because too many people "were scared they were going to lose a lot, because they were not getting support" and because many plantation workers were not contacted.

"Now we have about six counties and two or three hundred people on strike," Shelton said. "We don't have enough money to send out newsletters so that one place will know what's going on in other places, but people are still willing to strike, even if it calls for suffering."

However, he said, "If we don't have a car in some of these places, it will be just as it was before in the spring strike -- a lot of people on the plantations will be missed. We will also have to have a fair amount of food and clothing

for that many people."

When MFLU members discussed the fall strike at their September statewide meeting, they talked about ways to strengthen the union.

A woman from Leflore County said their local members wouldn't agree to strike, because "the people don't want to suffer."

A Shaw County woman said, "We've suffered, but we understand you can't get everything you want. We must keep on working and striking."

People from Shelby and Sunflower Counties said they couldn't join the strike, because their membership wasn't large enough.

A man from Tribbett County said, "What is the number needed to strike? For everyone that walks off the plantation not to go back, that hurts the white man."

To raise money for the strike, MFLU members are writing letters, touring Northern cities and setting up sewing and leather cooperatives.

Some members from McComb County want to set up a cooperative gas station and use profits from it to run a chicken farm. A group of 100 union members is going to Washington to lobby for a minimum wage bill and to ask the Department of Agriculture to issue surplus food to strikers.

A Freedom Labor Union recently started in Tennessee, which has over 100 members, including tractor drivers, also in planning a fall strike.



FARM WORKER HOUSES in West Point, Mississippi



# RIGHTS OF CITIZENS OVERLOOKED BY JUDGES, PUBLIC DEFENDERS

LOS ANGELES -- If the Watts insurrection proved anything, it is that justice for the poor is measured in small, very small doles.

Once the fires were out, the broken glass swept from the sidewalks and the ghetto settled into a wary truce, approximately 4100 people were in jail, charged with everything from burglary (looting) to plain drunk.

The law came down, hard, on the arrested rioters.

Approximately half of the arrestees obtained private counsel, if they could afford it, or if they could pay \$10 down and \$10 week after week. The other half were indigents, forced to turn to the public defender's office or somehow find volunteer counsel.

Those who had no prior experience with the courts put their faith in God and their lives in the hands of the public defenders. About half of the indigents called the civil

rights organizations, desperately or wistfully seeking help. Partly out of sympathy for the rioters' grievances if not their method of protest, and partly out of a sense of duty to the courts, some 150 attorneys volunteered to serve on a defense panel set up by the American Civil Liberties Union and the United Civil Rights Committee.

At last count, more than 700 indigents had requested ACLU-UCRC attorneys, and they were parcelled out to some 85. Most of the 85 were younger men, with little experience in criminal law, recruited from the ranks of the ACLU Lawyer's Division. Experienced in business law, tax law, personal injury and probate, they appeared for clients unlike any they had ever before defended.

## Held Without Bail

First, ACLU chief counsel A.L. Wirin reminded the presiding judge of the Su-

perior Court of the constitutional right to bail (in the heat of the riot, the district attorney had urged that rioters be held without bail). Bail was set.

Then four men -- Wirin and Gorenfeld of the ACLU, Arnett Hartsfield of UCRC, and Stanley Malone of the Langston Law Club -- argued in chambers and in court for bail reductions in felony cases.

In most cases, bail was reduced from an astronomical \$5000 to the more manageable \$500 and \$1000. This is not to say that the bail reduction sprang everyone; for many, the cash premium of 10 percent to the bondsman was impossible to raise, no matter what the bail. But it did give more people a chance for their freedom.

A few people, with no prior convictions, and with overwhelming responsibilities at home, were released on their own recognition. The number was small, but considering the original stance of no bail at

all, each one was a minor victory.

In contrast, the public defender was busy making deals with the district attorney -- "plead guilty on counts one and three and the D.A. will dismiss counts two and four and you'll get off with a fine."

The "amateur" criminal lawyers were helped by the fact that in many cases, perhaps hundreds, the police had made bad arrests, and knew it. But rather than simply release the prisoners, the police tried to bluff their way through arraignments and preliminaries.

Judges helped the police all too often. Since they are no more than mortal men, their anger at the six days of anarchy was reflected in their decisions. Still, as calm returned to the city and to the courts, and as the overwhelming calendar load eased, judges began to pay more attention to the niceties of the law. As the riot faded from pressing memory more and more people were being dismissed by the courts.

Nonetheless, innocent people who had the misfortune of being arraigned just after the riot now must stand trial, the victims of assembly-line justice.

The Municipal Courts, ramrodded by a city attorney just a shade to the left of William Howard Taft, were ferocious in their handling of misdemeanor cases. Judges would hear nothing about bail reductions, leaving stand the irony of bail being higher (\$1500) in misdemeanor than in felonies.

In the Municipal Courts, justice was a summary thing. With the city's public defender working hand-in-glove with the city attorney, guilty plea followed guilty plea. Assured of leniency -- maybe a fine or short sentence, weary of serving "dead time" (time served before trial which usually is not counted in the sentence), burdened with responsibilities at home -- defendants pleaded guilty of misdemeanors.

Most of those who pleaded guilty probably did so because they were. (After all, not everyone arrested was innocent of the charges.) But more than a few might have beaten the charges if they had been adequately defended.

For example, Marquette and Ronald Frye, whose arrest triggered the six-day insurrection, pleaded guilty to drunk driving and resisting arrest. When provided with counsel -- Wirin and Malone -- and some investigators, they changed their plea and now face a jury trial.

Hundreds of others will not be so fortunate. There are not enough volunteer attorneys, the courts are working desperately to clear their calendars, the undermanned public defender's office must necessarily concentrate on the cases that involve the worst abuses of police power.

The United States Constitution guarantees a trial in criminal cases without delay. That doesn't mean they have to be slapdash.



## CONFLICT IN LEGISLATURE

SACRAMENTO -- Watts as an historical event is over. But Watts as a political event is just beginning. Any resemblance between the two is (as they say in the movies) strictly coincidental. For politics has its own purpose. It imposes its own standards of judgment on historical events.

Consider these responses of state legislators. An Assemblyman testified that Watts means we need medical care for the aged. For him Watts is a symbol of the ills of society and a chance to get a little more political mileage for his pending medicare bill.

Then there is the Senate Interim Committee on Transportation: It rushed to Los Angeles to hold hearings to vindicate the role of the California Highway Patrol, which had been made a scapegoat for the riot by Chief Parker.

And there is Assemblyman Charles Conrad, a Republican from Los Angeles and one-time minority leader of the Assembly: he introduced a resolution, at the current special session of the legislature, commending Chief Parker for his role in quelling the riots. The resolution will no doubt thrust Conrad, and possibly the Republican Party, into the middle of a raging controversy over police practices in Los Angeles.

Beyond these responses, there is shaping up a more profound reaction to Watts. It will reflect a sharp political division over the nature of the explosive forces at work in our society.

At one pole of the reaction will be those who see in Watts the need to get tough with those who get out of line. At the other pole will be those who view Watts as the result of vast social and economic inequality. Most politicians will huddle in the middle.

It's difficult to predict which one of these contending views will predominate when the legislature gets down to legislating on the subject next year. One important clue can be found in legislative proposals put forward recently by Jesse M. Unruh, Speaker of the Assembly.

### Unruh's Program

The heart of the Speaker's proposals is the creation of special state programs in "priority areas" characterized by high population density, unemployment, illiteracy, school dropouts, substandard housing, criminal activity and similar evidences of "serious social malfunction." In education he proposes an immediate tripling

## Courts Twist Laws In Effort To Keep Watts Defendants From Receiving Counsel

A big problem was that of supplying counsel for the defendants, most of whom could not afford private counsel. The Public Defender's Office was not able to handle the large number of cases.

State law provides that if the Public Defender refuses to supply counsel, the court must supply other counsel, with compensation. The court then ruled that inability to provide counsel did not constitute refusal, and thus the court refused to supply the defendants with lawyers. The attorneys responded to this by attempting to advise all defendants to ask for jury trials, tying up the courts.

The court prevented this by refusing to allow the attorneys to see the defendants. The only way for an attorney to see an individual defendant was to claim to be his lawyer. If he did this, he waived his right to be a court-appointed counsel, thus thwarting the purpose of attorneys. In the felony cases still pending the attorneys are thus faced with a dilemma -- should they hold out for the principle that the court should provide and compensate counsel for the defendants, or should they yield to the more immediate needs of the defendants and become volunteer counsels?

-- from an interview with Arnett Hartsfield, ACLU attorney.

of money spent for compensatory pre-school programs, a reduction in class size, a "Master Teacher Corps" specializing in teaching the disadvantaged, and the establishment of "Advancement Schools" to improve basic skills and utilize the talents of ghetto residents.

In Employment and Housing the Speaker proposes the establishment of State-sponsored public works projects, the creation of various new jobs in schools and hospitals and the like, special loans for small businesses, low-cost housing, and studies of the relationship of lending laws and practices to integrations. Two other proposals deal with state disaster preparedness and riot insurance.

The Speaker's proposals are at their weakest when it comes to law enforcement. Of six specific proposals in this area, five have to do with increased penalties for arson and the possession of Molotov cocktails, greater controls over dangerous weapons, and more parole officers and Highway Patrolmen. Only one proposal is clearly aimed at police-community relations and that has to do with increasing the number of Negro police officers assigned to Negro neighborhoods. No mention is made of police review boards or any other methods for airing minority grievances against the police.

There will be other pressures for injecting Watts into the legislative arena next year. Part of them will have to do with the coming elections and the political mileage to be found in social disorder.

COLEMAN BLEASE

## TESTIMONY OF AN EX-SLAVE The Ku Klux Klan During Reconstruction

"The Ku Klux got after Uncle Will once. He was a brave man. He had a little mare that was a race horse. Will rode right through the bunch before they ever realized it was him. He got on the other side of them. They kept on after him. They went down to his house one night. He wouldn't run for nothing. He shot two of them, and they went away. Then he was out of ammunition. People urged him to leave, for they knew he didn't have no more bullets; but he wouldn't, and they came back and killed him.

They came down to Hancock County one night, and the boys hid on both sides of the bridge. When they got in the middle of the bridge, the boys commenced to fire on them from both sides, and they jumped into the river. The darkies went on home when they got through shooting at them; but there wasn't no more Ku Klux in Hancock County. The better-thinking white folks got together and stopped it.

The Ku Klux kept the niggers scared. They cowed them down so that they wouldn't go to the polls. I stood there one night when they were counting ballots. I belonged to the County Central Committee. I went in and stood and looked. Our ballot was long; theirs was short. I stood and seen Clait Turner calling their names from our ballots. I went out and got Rube Turner, and then we both went back. They couldn't call the votes that they had put down they had. Rube saw it.

Then they said, "Are you going to contest this?" Rube said, "Yes." But he didn't because it would have cost too much money. Rube was chairman of the committee.

The Ku Klux did a whole lot to keep the niggers away from the polls in Washington and Baldwin counties. They killed many a nigger down there.

They hanged a Ku Klux for killing his wife, and he said he didn't mind being hung, but he didn't want a damn nigger to see him die.

But they couldn't keep the niggers in Hancock County away from the polls. There was too many of them."

--Claiborne Moss, slave in Georgia, born in 1857, interviewed by members of the Federal Writers Project in 1938, recorded in LAY MY BURDEN DOWN: A Folk History of Slavery. University of Chicago Press.



growers will try to work. In many cases the strikebreakers do not know they are being asked to work behind picketlines until they reach the field. A large percentage never show up the next day after they learn from the shouting pickets what is at stake.

Strikebreakers have been recruited by the growers from as far away as Texas, according to observers in Delano. A few of the scabs live in Delano, but community pressure has been brought to bear on them by the strikers. In some cases the homes of contractors and workers

who are ignoring the picket lines have been picketed.

"In Delano, it is often brother against brother, or cousin against cousin," says Cesar Chavez, head of the militant Farm Workers Association. In many cases, members of the picket line will be close friends of those in the fields. Most of that is ended now. We have the area around Delano cleared up, and the growers must go further and further away to recruit strikebreakers."

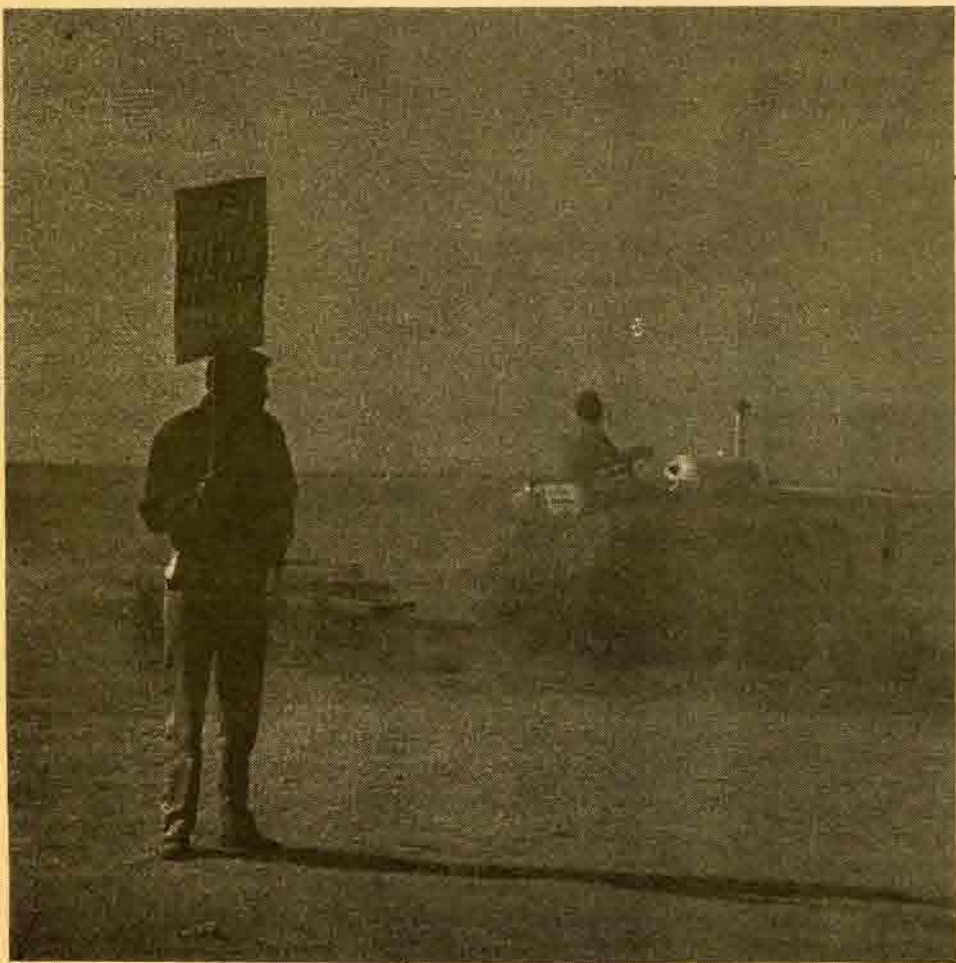
The Teamsters' Union has issued a statement saying that they will honor the

picket line of the agricultural workers. However, according to the reports of several AWOC picketers, this promise is hollow. What actually happens is that the teamster will stop his truck short of the picket line, get out, and allow a company representative to drive it across. The truck is then loaded or unloaded, driven back across the picket line, the teamster gets back in and drives away.

At a mass meeting in the Delano Filipino Community Center the evening after the march, this and other problems were discussed.

Attending this meeting were representatives of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Mexican-American Political Association, Fresno Council for Civil Unity, California Democratic Council, Community Services Organization, and Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, who spoke in support of the strike.

Over 90% of the strikers, says Cesar Chavez, have never been on a strike before. The tenacity and energy with which they carry out this exhausting and frustrating action is even more remarkable when this is known.



A LONE PICKET in a cloud of dust whipped up by high-speed tractor. This was a common harassment tactic used by growers.

## State Employment Office Hostile To Strikers

By Bob Barron

SPECIAL TO THE MOVEMENT

As a concerned urban Mexican-American, I went to see the Delano strike on the 26 and 27 of September. When I got to the Asociacion Nacional de Trabajadores Campesinos (National Farm Workers Association), I was immediately put to work.

I was asked to translate the testimony of striking farm workers for the State Department of Employment, which was supposed to be "certifying" the legitimacy of the strike, so that the Department would no longer refer workers to the strike area. As it happened, the matter turned out to be a rather disorderly affair in which enthusiastic strikers were turned into disgusted non-cooperators.

The first question that came to me when I started was why no one from the state tested the proficiency of my Spanish, since incompetency could lead to mistakes. Secondly, the state never explained why they were not supposed to get out of their late-model cars to go interview the strikers, and why I, a taxpayer acting without pay, was supposed to go get the strikers at their homes and bring them to the public servants.

Then when I began my 'job' as translator, the interviewer questioned me constantly as to whether I was not twisting statements around.

One example will give the flavor of the State Employment Department representative's attitude. We picked up a farm worker late Saturday afternoon. He had not eaten his dinner yet, and had planned to go shopping, but he cooperated.

After about 50 minutes, the state interviewer became strangely redundant, asking the same questions over and over. This went on for about 20 minutes, so when the interview was about an hour and a quarter long, the weary grape-picker grew very disgusted and said he could not go on. He was very hungry and his children had no milk. After some debate the interview was postponed until after dinner. When we came back, the grape-picker had gone. I went to his wife, who told me that she thought the state did not want the workers to strike.

The questionnaire used in the interview only involved 8 or 10 questions. It seemed very simple to me.

## Guerilla Warfare in the Grapes HOW A RURAL STRIKE IS FOUGHT

by Terence Cannon

If I were to compare a strike of agricultural workers to a factory strike, I would say this: it's like striking an industrial plant that has a thousand entrance gates and is 40 square miles large. And if that isn't bad enough, you don't know each morning where the plant will be, or where the gates are, or whether it will be open or closed, or what wages will be offered that day.

A typical day was Monday, September 27.

4:30 AM A picket line crew of 12, mostly Mexican-American farm workers, a few Anglos, led by Dolores Huerta of the Farm Workers Association (FWA), meet at the Filipino Community Center for breakfast. It's cooked by the wives of Filipino strikers at the AWOC headquarters.

5:00 AM We start off in 6 cars and head for our "sector," 40 square miles of grapes, cotton and county roads north of Delano. It is pitch-dark. We burrow into the darkness, past empty packing-sheds, through the small town of Richgrove. Dolores has heard that a certain grower will be hiring.

5:30 AM We reach the ranch, park the cars and stand on top of them, looking for signs of early morning activity -- trucks loading with boxes, buses leaving to pick up workers -- but we see nothing. We do see some lights on Road 192, so we drive to the intersection, douse our lights and wait. In all of the 40 square miles there seem only the twelve of us. Then a car barrels down Road 192, passes us, disappears in the darkness. It is a worker's car. More headlights: the familiar white pickup truck of a grower speeds past (all the growers' trucks are white, and all have the whip antenna of a two-way radio). When a convoy of 4 cars passes, we run to the cars and try to follow them. At an intersection the striker's car ahead of us runs out of gas and the driver asks us to take her to a gas station.

Here's where you begin to understand the problems involved. The nearest gas station is 15 miles away on Highway 99. Two cars now have to leave the roving picket. We're gone an hour.

6:30 AM We have no idea where the

rest of the group is. For a while we drive at random, touring the main gates of some of the major growers. No luck. We stop to ask a lone AWOC picket in front of a packing shed. As we're standing there another caravan appears. Six cars full of workers, followed by a white growers' bus, followed as if being herded along by three white grower's trucks, the line completed by the car of the Tulare County Sheriff's Office. The whole line moves in one unit at 60 miles an hour past us.

Again we jump in our cars and follow them. As we catch up, the Sheriff's car slows down to the legal speed and isolates us from the line of strikebreakers. The police car dawdles along, until we lose sight of the caravan. Fortunately for us, the tactic is troublesome but not too smart. We would still have been lost, if two grower's trucks hadn't conveniently blocked off a private road nearby and let us know exactly where the strikebreakers are.

Now there's nothing we can do. We don't want to separate, we don't know where our group is, and we can't take the time to go all the way back to Delano to report. So we take down the location, in case we meet someone.

7:00 AM We find a Filipino picket line. They turned back three cars of workers. The picket leader, a young man in his 20's for whom this is his first strike, tells us how it happened. He is full of sympathy for the strikebreakers -- they told him their landlords were going to cut off their electricity and gas; they owed money; they needed food. "Just like us," he said. "It was tough for them to turn around and go back, but they said they didn't want to hurt the strike, they didn't want to cross the picket line."

Two weeks before, when the strike had just begun, Mexican-Americans had crossed the picket lines easily, saying "it's just a Filipino strike." They had come a long way since then.

The Filipinos told us they had seen a Mexican-American picket line a mile away. It turned out to be our group. We had lost two hours by not having a two-way radio. Every grower's car has one.

7:30 AM The line was at the Caratan ranch, from whose property all the striking Filipino workers had been forcibly

evicted, the doors and windows of their houses nailed shut, and their belongings piled on the highway.

A portable packing shed was on the side of the road, perhaps 10 feet from the picketers, and a dialogue had been going on for at least an hour. Dolores felt that if we had all been there from the beginning the workers would have come off. The strikebreakers were beginning to debate among themselves, but when the two county police cars came up and parked, and Caratan's son began to strut up and down, their resolve weakened, and the line wasn't large enough to pressure them into walking off.

Still the dialogue went on. The teenage girls are the best at needling, baiting, teasing and cajoling the workers. When a worker would come out of the field with a box for the shed, the entire line would direct its attention to him, arguing in rapidfire Spanish. The rest of us, whose Spanish was limited, stood on the top of the cars and yelled "Huelgal Huelgal" (Strike, Strike) at the workers still in the fields.

It is a bitter experience, and a baffling one for workers who have never been on strike before, to stand a few feet away from a person who is taking their job away, and try to argue them into giving up their wages for an indefinite future, for the principle of negotiation. The farm worker lives in a shifting, unpredictable world; where will the next month's wages come from? What crops are ripe? Who's hiring? To ask him to give up what little security he has -- a job he has right here, right now, for a better future -- is difficult enough for experienced union organizers.

8:30 AM Caratan struts back and forth in front of the picketers with a Polaroid camera. (Everywhere you go you are photographed -- by the police, by the growers). He tried the previous week to run a picketer's car off the road, but only succeeded in losing the boxes on the back of his truck. We are still talking and shouting. The county police stay in the back. Two carloads of Filipinos join the picket line, and the morale goes up.

9:30 AM Afraid that we are getting through to the workers, Caratan moves

the picking operation into the center of his property, a half mile away from the county road. They move the packing shed and the boxes away from us, down the rows.

When the area has been cleared, Caratan drives up a caterpillar tractor, parks it in front of the line, holds down the accelerator and lets it idle; the sound drowns out our voices. Every grower has done this every day of the strike. We just stop yelling and wave the signs. Cesar Chavez, head of FWA, wants the pickets to stay on one field all day, so the workers in the field will not think the growers have defeated us with these tactics.

10:30 AM Caratan is not content with this. The fixed high-school pipsqueak grin is still on his face, but he's unhappy, so he uses Grower Tactic #2. He waits until the wind is blowing from the field toward the line, and then drives the tractor up and down in the two-inch dust, whipping it around in tight circles. The dust boils up in thick clouds, covering and hiding the picketers. He keeps this up for half an hour, but his attention span is short, and finally he parks it and lets it rev.

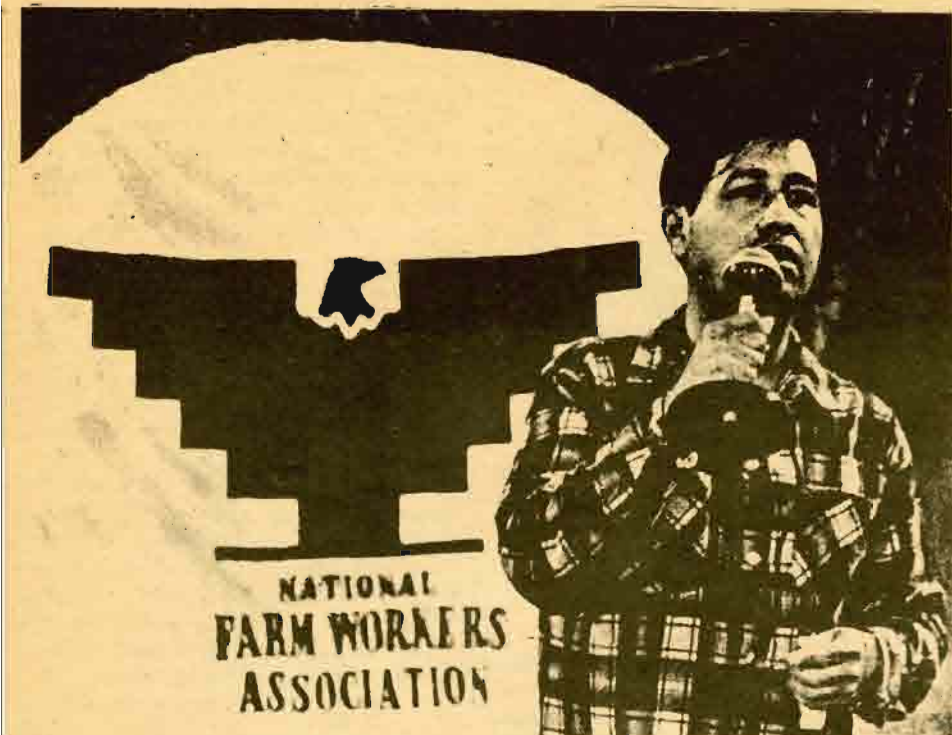
At noon we have sandwiches, apples, and soda. We've given up hope of pulling this particular gang off the field, but will stay to continue our presence. Dolores feels that though they work today, perhaps the next day they won't go out. Some of the strikers are demoralized, some take it in stride. It is hot; the county police are still there, Caratan is still there.

A young woman striker tells us that in 5 years of picking in the San Joaquin Valley, she has never seen a toilet provided in the fields. One is required by law, and the growers promised Secretary Wirtz that toilets would be provided (he was particularly shocked at the lack of toilets). None have been provided and none will be.

At 1 PM I have to return to Delano. The rest stay. This has been going on for three weeks. Often, the people on the line know or are related to people working in the fields. Sometimes they are successful. Sometimes not. Everyone is tired, particularly Dolores, who has I think, eight children, and went to sleep at midnight the night before.



# We're Somewhere Between a Movement And an Industrial Union



Cesar Chavez is the head of the 2000-member National Farm Workers Association (FWA), an independent organization of Spanish-speaking agricultural workers in the San Joaquin Valley of California. The interview took place at the FWA headquarters in Delano, September 25, 1965, during the largest farm workers strike since 1938.

*What do you hope to get from this strike?*

We want to set up the machinery for joint wage negotiations, grower-wide, in this area. There must be a system to wages and working conditions, not just up to every grower. We also want to put these contractors out of business.

*You mean through a closed shop and a hiring hall?*

Exactly.

Now we have to think about what that implies. The danger is that we will become like the building trades. Our situation is similar -- being the bargaining agent with many separate companies and contractors. We don't want to model ourselves on industrial unions; that would be bad. We want to get involved in politics, in voter registration, not just contract negotiation.

Under the industrial union model, the grower would become the organizer. He would enforce the closed shop system; he would check off the union dues. One guy -- the business agent -- would become king. Then you get favoritism, corruption. The trouble is that no institution can remain fluid.

*But no movement can stay formless very long, if it's successful.*

That's right. We have to find some cross between being a movement and being a union. The membership must maintain control; the power must not be centered in a few. Maybe we would have some system where the jobs were rotated. It is important to remain free to work on many

issues. That takes time, and sometimes it seems as if you get lost on unimportant issues. We're experimenting.

*How do you organize? Do you have workshops?*

We organize one-to-one. If I have to drive a worker somewhere in my car, he's a captive audience. Then we talk about the Association and what it means. This kind of organizing spreads from person to person. We have had no membership drive in two years, but we have 2000 members.

We have no contracts with the growers, so we can't help our members in that way primarily. We service our members in other ways, like our credit union. 16 months ago we had \$37 in our Credit Union, this month we have \$26,000. In servicing our members they learn how to help themselves; in that way it's an educational program. We help to get a guy a driver's license. We are working on setting up autonomous community organizations: a coop drugstore, cooperative service stations -- the profit from which will go into a workers welfare fund. If the labor movement had established consumer cooperatives, it would be strong today. I'm convinced that's one of the reasons it's not.

## HARASSMENT BY GROWERS, POLICE

Persecution by authorities is considerably less in the present grape-pickers strike than in any previous action of this sort in the San Joaquin Valley.

Why? It's hard to say. "The Sheriff hasn't been excellent, but he's acting better than before," said Cesar Chavez, head of the Farm Workers Association (FWA). "Why all of a sudden are they acting nice? They're not even using dogs. It's too good to be true."

The only answer Chavez could suggest was that he had announced that members of SNCC and CORE were taking part in the strike, and he had heard a police officer say "We don't want another Selma here."



(L to R) GROWER, HIS SON and two Tulare County Sheriff's Department men

### Chavez Group Beaten

This doesn't mean things have been pleasant. On Thursday September 23 the FWA had a picket line in front of the home of one of the scabbing contractors. It was night. A few Delano police had been on the scene for a while but left. 15 growers, most of whom had been drinking, showed up and began to punch the pickets, Cesar Chavez among them. A crowd of about 300 Mexican-American workers gathered, and were upset when the pickets did not hit back.

One of them ran to the headquarters of the other striking union, AWOC, where a meeting was in progress. The meeting was called off and 400 Filipinos arrived on the scene, ready to take on the growers. Chavez by this time had managed to get to a phone, and called the Sheriff, who drove up several minutes later. The Sheriff, a Mexican-American, but no friend to the farm workers, shouted that he'd arrest the next person who touched anyone else. A grower, who obviously didn't think this applied to growers, grabbed a picket and was arrested. The Sheriff pushed the man in his car, as the rest of the growers, irate that "their" police force was being used against

*Is this different from the way AWOC organizes?*

AWOC uses the standard union organizing procedures. Community organizing is tough; it never stops. In union organizing, once you get a contract you stop working. Everybody has a way of keeping their members in, except us. The Church can keep people in -- if you leave you go to Hell. The Unions can keep members -- if you leave you lose your job. With us -- nothing like that.

*What is the major problem in an agricultural strike?*

Imported scabs. Yesterday we saw two buses of strikebreakers come in from Fresno, and one from LA. One grower had a crew of 40 scabs, some less than 13 years old.

Some of the scabs are union members from other industries; they will come out of the fields when you tell them there is a strike. We also have spies working inside the field gangs to convince them they should leave the job. But without three years of growing membership it would have been impossible. Basically it's guerilla warfare. The growers even have airplanes and helicopters.

them, crowded around the car, threatening the Sheriff with the loss of his job.

By the end of two weeks of strike, these threats had not kept five growers from being arrested for harassment and assault. Only two strikers were arrested.

The Sheriff's Offices of Tulare and Kern Counties are not usually as considerate of the pickets. They spend most of their time in the fields either in pleasant conversation with the growers or asking the pickets unfriendly questions.

### Stopped by Police

Saturday night, September 25, three carsful of Kern County deputies and a paddy wagon stopped a carload of Filipinos. It took the cops nearly 25 minutes to take the names and addresses of everyone in the car all the while a photographer from KBAK maneuvered around the car and took mug shots of all occupants with a telephoto lens.

The cops gave nobody a ticket. They brought no charges. When asked why the car had been stopped, the cops said they were making a "confidential investigation relating to the strike."

There have been many tactics used to harass the roving picket lines. The growers have set up their insecticide rigs by the road and sprayed the strikers with chemicals. They have displayed pistols and rifles in a menacing manner, and posted armed private Security Guards at fields being struck.

### Labor Camp Evictions

The Caratan Ranch has three private labor camps which housed Filipino workers, many of whom had lived there for up to 30 years. Their belongings were tossed out on the ground, armed guards evicted the workers; the windows were nailed shut and the doors padlocked. Camp #3 was later used to house imported strikebreakers.

A favorite grower tactic is to plow up the dust in front of the strikers with tractors. This builds a boiling cloud of dust, almost as effective as tear gas. During this the police watch patiently, even when the dust blows in their direction.

Another is to push down the accelerator a tractor and leave it idling at full blast, which drowns out the cries of the picketers so they cannot be heard in the field. At last notice, the use of injunctions and restraining orders on the part of growers had increased. The language of these orders was indefinite and sweeping, and seemed to infringe on such common activities as talking and meeting. As yet they have not been legally challenged by the unions, but action is being considered.

At press time, "routine" police harassment was reported on the increase. This may be an indication that the strike was being felt by the growers.

## Striking Grape Pickers Need Your Help

The farmworkers on strike are undergoing severe financial difficulties. Many are in need of food. Money is needed for gas, telephone, mimeograph paper, and food. Send donations to FARM WORKERS ASSOCIATION c/o SNCC, 1316 Masonic, San Francisco, California 94117.

## THE TWO FARM UNIONS

### FWA

### AWOC

The Farm Workers Association was organized three years ago by activists in the Community Service Organization (CSO), a Mexican-American civic group founded by Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation.

Three CSO staffers; Cesar Chavez, national director, Dolores Huerta, lobbyist, and Gilbert Pedilla, vice president, pulled out to start the Farm Workers Association.

FWA activities are concentrated in Kern, Tulare, and Kings Counties. Until the present grape strike, FWA strikes have been small and against single growers. By attempting to build a real power base in the farm communities, it is constantly at war with more politically oriented groups.

FWA recently picketed the convention of the Mexican-American Political Association (MAPA) - another offshoot of CSO - because MAPA leaders were serving as labor department consultants on farm labor recruitment, under the government established farm labor wage. FWA wants to bargain with growers, not government, for wages.

The first director of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO, was Norman Smith, ex-UAW organizer who led some of the auto sit-down strikes in the 30's. Beginning in 1959 he traveled through the California valleys recruiting organizers and giving speeches. Occasional strikes were called. Wages were forced upward but no contracts signed.

In the winter of 1960-61 AWOC and the AFL-CIO United Packinghouse Workers called a general strike in the Imperial Valley lettuce harvest. This stirred a hornet's nest of jurisdictional conflict in the AFL-CIO palace guard. At the critical peak of the strike, George Meany ordered AWOC to pull out. The strike collapsed.

Directorship was turned over to Al Green, veteran union organizer from the Plasterers Union. Under his leadership, AWOC is a strong political voice for the farm workers. AFL-CIO financial commitment has been cut back. Many AWOC offices have been closed, most organizers laid off.



# Mississippi Counterattacks. The War On Poverty

The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) sponsored what may have been the pithiest program of its short life this summer in Mississippi.

Under Project HEAD START, approximately 6,000 Negro pre-school children spent seven weeks in child development centers in 75 Mississippi communities. By mid-August, Washington had announced that HEAD START was to become a permanent feature of the war on poverty. But there was little rejoicing in the Mississippi communities. It appeared that if these centers were to be re-funded at all, the budget would be sliced by two-thirds, and the program of the sponsoring group, the Child Development Group of Mississippi (CDGM), would be tailored to fit the interests of the Great Society.



CDGM's HEAD START program -- as opposed to the others in the state, sponsored by local boards of education -- was developed and run by community people, with a minimum of direction from a central staff. While CDGM imported approximately 150 white resource teachers to live and work in these communities, the tone and spirit of the programs were set by local leadership.

Perhaps that is why Mississippi's Senator Stennis, the national spokesman for those forces in the state which fought the program from the outset, demanded in a telegram to OEO head Sargent Shriver that the program be investigated. Stennis charged mishandling of funds and that CDGM had subsidized civil rights organizations in the state.

Senator Stennis, as one OEO official explained, unlike Eastland, enjoys a measure of respect in Washington liberal circles. He might have added that Stennis enjoys a measure of power, sitting as he does on the Senate appropriations subcommittee when appropriations for the Viet Nam war are under congressional consideration.

In any case the Child Development Group was in trouble. Under fire from Stennis, OEO brought pressure on the Board of Directors for changes which would attempt to head off Stennis' charges.

Without Stennis, CDGM was in trouble. The staggering job of setting up so ambitious a program, the logistical problems in coordinating centers ranging from the Delta to the hill lands to the coast, plus the experimental projects -- all meant trouble for a seven weeks program, already harassed by just being in Mississippi.

Most pressing were fiscal problems. OEO, in a weak public statement answering Stennis' charges, found no illicit use of funds, but found some "fiscal amateurism."

From CDGM's point of view, however, much more serious was the fact that the financial plan was not working, and that funds and payrolls were not getting to the communities. Due to a conspiracy of factors -- few local people understood government red tape, harassment by auditors from OEO and the Senate, some administrative incompetence -- the local committees were simply not getting the funds to operate. Many had gone heavily into debt, and the money (which eventually would arrive) was not in sight. The centers lived on promises, and the good will of a federal program.

Another factor complicated CDGM's fiscal and administrative problems. One of the premises of the program was the training of Mississippians for responsible positions in the organization. This was no fiction to satisfy OEO rhetoric, but as the program got underway it was frequently the case that trainees were given responsibilities without a structure for learning in such an intensive administrative area.



The CDGM staff was aware, of course, of the problems and was making every effort to set them right when the ultimatum from OEO struck. It almost wrecked CDGM. At a meeting with Project Director Tom Levin, and the Board, OEO representatives demanded that the central staff relocate from the Mt. Beulah Academy near Jackson to a college campus in a remote area of the state. The motive was to disassociate the federal program



from the radical Delta Ministry, which owned the Academy, and the Freedom Democratic Party, which had used it as headquarters during the June demonstrations. The problems of "amateurism" mattered less than what OEO admitted later to be the "political" problem of CDGM's connections with the civil rights movement.

The Board of Directors, under pressure from OEO to comply or see the program collapse, instructed the staff to make the move. Levin and his staff, virtually to a man, voted the following day to resign and serve the communities without pay until an interim staff, provided by Washington, could be trained. Their position was that the move was logistically impossible given the time remaining, and in general undesirable since the nature of the program required access to a metropolitan area. Further, it seemed as if OEO was less concerned with solving substantive problems than with dodging the flak from Stennis.

A compromise came out of a series of frantic negotiations among the Board, the staff and OEO. The staff's decision to resign won the concession to remain at Mt. Beulah. But the price of the compromise was a raft of misunderstanding, mistrust and alienation between the staff and the Board, and the "promotion" of Levin. For the remaining two weeks the project director was to work on developing future programs, and to stop making policy.

The changes demanded by OEO involved basic structural issues. There was clearly more involved than amateurism or irresponsibility; Levin and his staff represented a radical political direction which OEO, a creation of the Johnson and Kennedy administrations, cannot allow.

HEAD START in Mississippi was a radically conceived program which offered its participants, most of whom are civil rights activists, new tools for community organization. It offered both parents and teachers a direction away from a state education system unworthy of the name. It encouraged the exciting notion of community participation in education rather

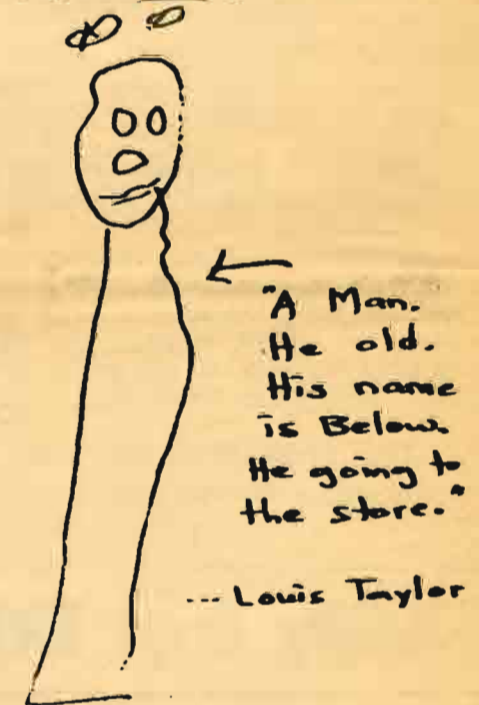
than turning education over to the professionals. It provided social services and medical programs, which demonstrated the corruption and inadequacies of state and federal offerings. All this was heady stuff for a schizophrenic government agency which must represent at once both the best and worst of the Great Society.

Perhaps more significant, most of the communities in the CDGM program were "movement" communities, and most of the committees corresponded to local FDP leadership. (This was a source of conflict with the movement as well as Senator Stennis. Civil rights activists charged that federal monies were co-opting community support.)

Of lesser significance, but more spectacular in Stennis' charges, was that many CDGM staff simply refused to give up movement involvement and associations. There were some instances of using CDGM resources to support movement activities.

Yet the program had been "saved", and the threatened withholding of funds did not happen. Miraculously, the demoralization of the central staff had little effect upon the communities or their work in the centers. Despite the fact that many people have not yet received their salaries, and that many who can ill afford it have paid for expenses out of their pockets, the communities are enthusiastic about continuing the program.

The program closed at the end of August, a huge success despite the politics and conflicts between the board, the staff and OEO. Most communities reported rather spectacular successes in working with the children, many of whom had entered the program not knowing their names.



"A Man.  
He old.  
His name  
is Below.  
He going to  
the store."

... Louis Taylor

## BOOK REVIEW

## The "Right" To Be Middle Class

DARK GHETTO: Dilemmas of Social Power, by Kenneth B. Clark, Harper & Row, 1965, \$4.95

Dr. Kenneth B. Clark says,

"To deny the Negro the right to exchange lower-class suffering for middle-class suffering on the grounds, in certain ways defensible, that the good life is not so good after all, is to make for a group the kind of moral decisions each individual has the right to make for himself, whether he choose good or ill. It would be psychologically naive and even cruel to ask the oppressed to transform the values of American culture. Before they can be motivated to try, they need to experience those values for themselves with all the satisfactions and all the frustrations and anxieties."

Read it again. I think there's something eerie about this passage. Why does it seem on the face reasonable, liberal, but at the same time out-of-focus, unreal, off-center?

First, who would deny the Negro this "right"? Since Dr. Clark doesn't mean the NAACP or the Urban League, as he makes clear in the rest of his book, he must mean the Movement: SNCC, SDS, CORE, maybe Martin Luther King; certainly the "Communists," maybe the Muslims.

Why does he use the word "deny"? How would we deny the Negro this "right"? By arguing, and he says it is "in certain

ways" defensible, that middle-class America isn't satisfactory? Or is he implying that we will cloud the Negroes' brains? How do we come by this power? Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer says, "America is sick, all of it, from the Federal Government on down. We were treated as badly in Washington as we are in Jackson." Did we deny Mrs. Hamer the right to decide to become middle-class? Is she the victim of radical indoctrination?

That's a "moral" decision, Dr. Clark says. Not a political judgment. A moral decision that presumably the Negro is free to make, if certain parties don't deny him that chance. He has the "right" to make that choice. But Dr. Clark is concerned that someone is stepping in the way of his making that decision. Someone, you would imagine, who had been there and come back to tell the tale. Two kinds of people have been there: middle-class-raised young people who have seen middle-classdom and turned against it; and Mrs. Hamer and her friends who have come from the cotton fields and the pantries of the South and found out how middle-class, liberal, mainstream America acts. It acts like an oppressor.

Dr. Clark uses the word "oppressed." The Negroes are oppressed, he says. But it would be cruel to ask them to change middle-class America, change its "values and culture." Are the Negroes oppressed by a culture? Dr. Clark uses those words in one sentence. Or are they oppressed by

power? Would it be cruel to ask Negroes to transform the power that oppresses them? We think they must. Dr. Clark thinks it would be psychologically naive. (Not "politically" naive.) Why? Because it reads on the right Negroes have not to challenge their oppressor?

Dr. Clark says they must "experience" the values that oppress them before they can change those values (if it be values that oppress them). How do they objectively experience those values without being changed to the point that they don't want to alter American values at all? Dr. Clark shows in another part of his book that those Negroes who do "experience" these values are often changed so that they cease to fight and begin to scramble for the "satisfactions" of the middle-class system. Is that, behind it all, what Dr. Clark wants?

When everybody's middle-class in the Great Society will that then be the definition of integration?

A Harlem man quoted by Dr. Clark says, "No one with a mop can expect respect from a banker, or an attorney, or men who create jobs and all you have is a mop. Are you crazy? Whoever heard of integration between a mop and a banker?"

Does this man agree with Dr. Clark? Are they saying the same thing? Is it cruel to ask this man to transform the values of American culture?

TERENCE CANNON

The printing project had produced educational materials relevant to rural Mississippi children where literally none existed. The health program was able to get each child not only a physical examination, but treatment in many cases. (HEAD START programs typically provide \$20 in the health budget to be spent entirely on the physical. CDGM believed that examinations are useless when parents cannot follow up with treatment; therefore they paid doctors \$3 per child for examinations, did most of their own lab work using doctors from the Medical Committee on Human Rights.)

It is not clear at this writing whether there will be future CDGM programs. The Child Development Group, as one might suspect, was organized to receive and administer poverty funds. If financial assistance is not forthcoming, the Group will dissolve. OEO has encouraged CDGM to submit proposals. Their best advice is, however, that the budget figure should not exceed \$3 million for 9 months, a figure considerably less than the grant for the summer (\$1 - 1/3 million for seven weeks, the largest HEAD START grant made to any private organization.)

Yet even if a grant is received and the structural concessions made, there remains the question raised by the summer experience -- whether a genuine poverty program is possible. It seems to be inevitable that when the poor organize they will slam headlong into the power interests, who are so skilled and so entrenched in the political fabric of this country, that they can practically dictate the terms of survival.

JOAN BOWMAN



## THE CHURCH MUST HELP UPSET THE STATUS QUO

To the Editor:

In the July issue of "The Movement" appeared an article entitled "Fighting Agribusiness" which described in some detail the present structure of corporation agriculture in the Delta area of Mississippi. Following is a slight rewrite of that article, with a few name changes. It still is just as accurate, but has been changed to tell something of the story of the agricultural workers in California. Changes are underlined:

The union is fighting the rich farmer who operates his ranch as if it were a huge industrial corporation. Foreign visitors come to Kern County Land Company, which owns more than 200 square miles in Kern county alone. This English controlled corporation is typical of the growing concentration of agriculture in America. From the time of civil war to about 1930, the land of California's Central Valley was divided among increasing numbers of small farmers and renters. But since then the trend has reversed. Small farmers and renters have dwindled because farm land costs too much for poor people and very little decent land is for sale. For the Negro there is practically none at all.

I believe that you can take it from there. Suffice it to say, that at least in my experience with agriculture in this area, the remainder of the article can easily describe the farm day-laborers situation in the San Joaquin Valley as well as in the Delta counties of Mississippi. Wages, when you work, are a little higher, but the lack of any job tenure more than makes up the difference.

Yours for freedom,

Frank Bruins  
BakersfieldBy Dave Knotts  
Dept. of Urban Church  
United Presbyterian Church

A major issue which is facing the churches today is the use of power for social change. Traditionally, the church as a part of the Establishment has chosen to work in poverty areas and among people suffering from injustice in ways that would not upset the status quo. This has meant that the church has often operated a settlement house in the ghetto which offers to the community a kind of "ministry of philanthropy"--goods (food and clothing) and services (counseling and recreation) being offered to the people. Nothing or very little is said about mass organization in order to enable the people to acquire the power to deal with the power structure and to correct injustices.

**Beheaded Leaders**

The church as a part of the power order has approached the powerless in a well-defined way. As Dan Dodson of New York University has written, "they have gotten the bright ones of the powerless involved, got them to participate, alienated them in their sentiments and memories and identity from the group of which they are a part, made them ashamed of their heritage--every group has had to wrestle with the phenomena of group self-hate--got them to take stock in the mythologies of the American Dream--that every person will be rewarded according to his initiative and his ability. Ultimately when they have been sandpapered sufficiently to their specifications they are transmuted into the dominant group. Thus we have always siphoned off the potential leadership of the minority and left the group to stew in its own problems. We have, as a consequence, never solved the problem of the slums. They stand as a monument to the integrative process of the power order in every large American city." Traditionally, the settlement

house has offered this integrative process to those it deems to have potential and offers adjustment to the rest. As Saul Alinsky has said, offering social adjustment to the poor is treason of the highest order.

**Settlement House  
Out-of-Date**

Today the settlement house style of ministry is under attack from many quarters of the church. As more Protestant and Catholic clergymen are exposed to mass organization by Saul Alinsky, and as more churches help sponsor SNCC organizers in California, the more piercing will be the criticism of the churches' welfare colonialist ministries in the ghetto. The problems will not disappear overnight, however. For example, how will the Protestant churches in Los Angeles which support settlement houses in Watts choose to use the large sum of money they have secured recently for enabling the people to organize in order to shape their own future or will the money be used in paternalistic programs determined by which suburbanites? Some changes in the church's standard pattern of ministry can be evidenced in the San Francisco Bay area where the church is aiding community organizational efforts in San Francisco and Oakland. In some cases the church is helping to pay organizers. Also, across the country the church has supported community organization in the Woodlawn area of Chicago, Rochester, and money is being contributed toward the future organization of such cities as Kansas City, St. Louis, Buffalo, and Syracuse.

**Reconciliation=Status Quo**

Obviously, the use of power for social change has become a major issue for the church because so many of our major denominational churches are a part of the status quo power structure. To challenge

the power structure with powerful community organizations supported wholly or in part by the church means that many churchmen will withdraw their financial support. Thus, we are faced in the church with an internal problem of securing wide agreement so that funds may continue to be channeled into community organization. It is easy to persuade a middle-class congregation to help pay for services to the poor. It is extremely difficult to persuade them to share power. It is even more difficult to persuade them to work through the conflict process. Frequently, it is the middle-class congregation which calls upon its pastor to be the arbiter in a community dispute, usually in the name of reconciliation. Too often in these cases reconciliation means to restore the status quo.

**Dislodge Power**

Reinhold Neibuhr, a Protestant theologian, has written that wherever there is injustice in society, there is some significant disproportion of power, and whichever group it is that benefits from the exploitation can be dislodged only when power is raised against it. If the church is to be about its business of social justice, then it must recognize the implications for community organization in Neibuhr's statement.

Dan Dodson offers a good summary. "In this time of great confrontation the church will have forfeited its right to the allegiances of man, if she allows herself to become a handmaid to the power order which is. The aspirations of the poor in these great urban centers shall not be blighted by the glitter of the magnificent crosses of the affluent. Community organization may be the testing point at which this determination is made. In the name of service, mankind shall not be debased. The cup of water given in His name which compromises the receiver is a hollow mockery."

## Report From Arkansas SNCC

## Project Tightly Organized, But Elections Lost

The Arkansas SNCC project differs from most other SNCC projects in the South, according to California volunteers, Vince O'Conner and Brian Rybolt. There is harassment, but no police terror. The only voting requirements in Arkansas are residence requirements.

The focus of the SNCC project has been on community services - recreation, freedom centers, freedom schools - and on local elections.

They did not work on a Freedom Democratic Party, but on a Negro "political force," a group that will run candidates when they have a chance to win, or endorse liberal candidates.

**Corrupt Machine**

The Faubus political machine in Arkansas is very corrupt, O'Connor and Rybolt reported. "For a candidate to win in the Negro community, he has to receive at least 75% of the vote - the extra 25% is what's thrown out." There is no secret ballot, and no voting machines. The ballots are stamped with a number, which corresponds with the voter's name. A SNCC project director, who was supposed to be a poll watcher in Forrest City was turned away at gunpoint. There is a regulation that all polling booths must be on city property. A booth set up at a Beauty Salon in the ghetto was declared invalid after the election, and all its votes thrown out.

The project devoted much of its time to supporting Negro candidates and registering Negroes to vote in congressional and school board elections.

At press time, THE MOVEMENT received a letter from Myrtle Glascoe, another

volunteer in West Helena, Arkansas, reporting on the elections.

"Elections over - we lost - all 25 Negro candidates across the state did. Our people just didn't go to the polls. Were in the cotton fields, etc., etc. Polls opened 8 a.m. closed 6:30 p.m. People leave for fields 6:30-7 a.m., return about same time p.m. Also, the black middleclass here



BEN GRINAGE, state project director

(teachers and such) actively fought us - one principal told his teachers how to vote over the PA system it's rumored - other Black "rich" folk paid folks not to vote. The issue was QUALIFICATIONS - I'm so damned sick of that word I could throw up."

**Local Group**

In Forrest City, SNCC worked with a local group, the St. Francis Achievement Committee. The Committee was started by 6 local men who wanted to go bowling, and had to integrate the local bowling alley to do it. 100 to 150 now attend its weekly meetings. They are working on improving the local schools, and ran candidates in the school board elections. The issues they raised give an idea of the condition of the Arkansas Negro high schools. They campaigned for the formation of a PTA, open School Board meetings, a lunch program, a library (all students pay a \$1 "library fee," but there are no new books in the school library), science labs, a water fountain. The principal of the school asked his students to raise the money for their school. They went into the community and raised \$1700. No one knows where the money went.

In Gould (population 2000, 80% Negro), the high school students were active in voter registration. There are 500 students in the school, which is a wood structure with gaping holes, condemned 11 years ago. The library has 150 books.

**Injunction**

Arkansas has a "Freedom of Choice" integration plan. Students submit two choices of schools they wish to attend. In Gould none of their choices were honored. The principal of the school refused to speak to a student delegation, and gave weak excuses about the failure of the 'choice' plan when questioned. SNCC planned a demonstration, but the school board got an injunction against it. The injunction was one

of the broadest ever seen; it prohibited 2 or more persons in Gould from gathering to discuss any problems relating to their school.

Discipline on the project was unusually tight (for a SNCC project). One staff member and one volunteer were asked to leave for violating security regulations and for doing poor work. Two state-wide staff meetings were held during the summer to compare projects and air grievances. Relations with the Atlanta SNCC office were good, and there were few financial crisis.

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# Organizing Poor Whites, Negroes In Appalachia

Deep inside the natural beauty and splendor of the Appalachian Mountains is Sevier County, in east Tennessee. Sevier County is a prison of poverty, frustration and helplessness for most of the 24,000 people who live there.

This summer, the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF) sponsored the "Southern Mountain Project" to organize poor whites and Negroes there.

Small farmers, traditional backbone of the region's prosperity, are facing ruin because they cannot compete with the larger industrial farms. Except for the resort town of Gatlinburg, which employs thousands at below subsistence pay, and a textile mill owned by a national board member of the John Birch Society the area lacks regular industry. The rich mountain resources have been exploited for generations at the expense of the area's greatest resource, its people.

## Allotment Squeeze

The major cash crop of the area is tobacco. At the county level, tobacco allotments are controlled by the same big farmers that are driving the mass of small farmers off the land. A small farmer is lucky to get an allotment of over .2 of an acre, which may return a profit of fifty dollars for a year's work.

Most of the families grow some of what they need on their own land, and a few crops that can be sold on the open market. But the land is not fertile enough and farmers are forced to borrow on their future crops. They never have enough to buy all they need, and they can't repair their machinery. They own land, but they are land poor.

## Hunt for Jobs

This forces farmers to look for additional work. Many become semi-skilled labor on construction crews at \$1.25 an hour; for some there are jobs at the few factories in the metropolitan Knoxville. But jobs are hard to find, and hard to reach from an isolated farm. During the winter snows, construction work stops. Some women work but it is a fortunate family that sees a weekly pay check all year round.

The economy of Sevier county is geared to Gatlinburg, the gateway to Great Smoky Mountain National Park, through which 85,000 cars pass every week during the summer and fall tourist season. During this period people come from fifty or sixty miles away to find work. Women are forced to compete with college students. Tourist business is assured; minimum wage laws do not apply; so the women are forced to work six or seven days a week, earning anywhere from a \$1.50 a day to \$40 a week.

## Courthouse Corruption

The citizens of Sevier County also face the constant harassment of corrupt and stupid county officials. Political control is centralized within the courthouse and it is the county judge who runs the courthouse. The people are isolated from one another; there is little opportunity for them to join in any type of a political organization. They are made to feel that politics is corrupt, and county officials are unremovable, so they do not vote. They have no political power; in a practical sense, they are disenfranchised.

The county government offers few services. The roads are all dirt and rock. In response to people's complaints, the county officials do nothing more than occasionally grade the roads, and every election time, promise to pave them. There is the constant threat of floods (in a county that is an intricate part of the Tennessee Valley Authority). Every year flood damage runs into the millions, and often lives are lost. Ironically, there is no piped water to the houses; each family must dig their own well or tap a near-by stream.

## Little Federal Aid

The lack of any housing program means that many of the people live in shacks or housing of the lowest kind. Almost all have out-houses, and only some have running water. There are no recreational facilities in the county outside the one high school. Federal funds come rarely, for the county is staunchly conservative Republican. Their Representative consistently vetoes relief programs. The welfare administrator is part of the same courthouse gang that runs the government in the county. Welfare is almost unobtainable, and if received, the amount for a month is barely enough to buy a week's food.

Over half the residents of Sevier County earn much less than the \$3,000 poverty level set by the federal government, and many make less than \$1,500. A fourth do not own an automobile, a radio, or a television. For all practical purposes, they are cut off from the outside world. Over 85% of the people belong to no other social organization except the church. To use only the word "poverty" in describing life in the Appalachians is like using only the word "bright" to describe the sun.

## Organizing Begins

The aim of the Southern Mountain Project is to develop a grass roots movement among the isolated, disinherited, and impoverished whites and Negroes in the Appalachians. It is upon this basic premise -- that only from the inherent power of people themselves, solidly organized, can true change come -- that the project is based. Since political and economic exploitation of the people and their land perpetuates the system, then it will be political and economic solutions that the movement must seek.

We began our field work in the Mill Creek community of Sevier County, first contacting a rural preacher, who invited us to speak to his congregation.

Mill Creek lies on the other side of a mountain from the one main highway of the county. The dirt road to Mill Creek runs over Pine Mountain, and then into a crater-like valley surrounded by mountain peaks. Occasionally we saw a house to the side of the road; deeper into the back country the houses turned into shacks. Finally, two nice farms appeared off to the right; we crossed a crude, plank bridge and entered Mill Creek.

We spoke to the congregation and were received with a mixture of warmth, curiosity, suspicion and aloofness. We talked to many of the people, and some became interested. After that, we came and talked to the people in their homes.

# LIFE WITH LYNDON IN THE GREAT SOCIETY THE CHALLENGE IS DEAD, SO IS THE GOVERNMENT

The Mississippi Challenge is over. It failed to secure representation for Mississippi Negroes in the House of Representatives, as it had failed to secure that representation in the Democratic National Convention. It failed, not because Mississippi Negroes didn't know how to handle themselves in politics, not because the members of the House didn't understand the issues, or weren't fully informed, not because the people of the United States were kept from knowing what was going on (for they have little effective voice in what is done in Washington). The challenge failed (who can dispute it?) because the words of Frederick Douglass, spoken to white American 113 years ago, are as true today as then: "...your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brassfronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery ... a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States, at this very hour."

Omar Burlison, chairman of the Committee on House Administration, wrapped it all up very neatly when, explaining why the Committee recommended dismissal of the challenge, he said: "...all of the contestants in this case contend that Negroes have been systematically excluded from registering and voting in the State of Mississippi. But even if these charges are true I say to you, this House in the past has refused to declare a seat vacant where large numbers of voters were known to be illegally disfranchised." (emphasis added)

So much for the constitution of the U.S., the courts, the judges, the senators and representatives, and all the rest of the machinery which stands behind and enforces the laws of the United States. By their own measure they are a fraud.

Such is the example which Lyndon's Great Society sets before the world.

JACK MINNIS

## People Understand

We noticed immediately that the people displayed a high degree of political understanding. They spoke of better roads, flood control, jobs and unions. They talked about the corrupt politicians who steal their tax money, the big farmers who are forcing them off the land, and the employers at Gatlinburg who don't pay them enough. They talked of the rich as opposed to the poor, in terms of "us" and "them."

Most important, they knew the need for organization; they knew they did not have power because they were not together. We did not have to explain what had to be done. They wanted to know how. As one man asked, "I know we got to have unions, but how do we do it?"

The people of Mill Creek are farmers, but they are being forced off the land to stay alive. A few work at the Bircher's textile mill for \$62.50 per six-day week. Others find temporary jobs on construction crews. Sometimes the women work, and sometimes they are the only ones to have a job. An old man who gets no welfare makes legs for stools to be sold at a tourist shop in Gatlinburg. He gets 18 cents a leg. Some just can't find work.

Taxes are high. One man with a 26 acre farm has his land assessed at \$18,000, and the tax is over \$5 per hundred of assessed valuation. During winter, the roads are snowed in, and sometimes the people can't get out for a week.

## Integrated Area

We also worked in Strawberry Plains. The people here are a little better off than in Mill Creek, but the bad roads, floods, and corrupt county officials are the same. This area is integrated; Negro and white families live side by side in relative peace. In 1960 a white girl was enrolled in an all Negro school, and the most trouble came from the school board, not the people of the community.

There is a long history of relative racial peace in the predominately white Appalachians. During the civil war, the mountain farmers, too poor to own their own slaves, volunteered by the thousands for the Union. After the war, they retained the racial tolerance and Republican heritage.

While there has been segregation in Sevier County, the basic independence of the farmer and the drives for unionization created a broader feeling of unity. They speak of "us" and "them," and the "us" includes the Negroes. Like one man said,

"Them Negroes they being kept down too. If we form an organization, we just got to have them; if we don't, them politicians will pull us to pieces and use us one against the other."

In Strawberry Plains, we talked to both white and Negro families. The man most vocal in his desire for action is Negro, and with him, white homes were reached. In Sevierville, the county seat, we worked with a Negro girl born in the county. Again, whites were responsive.

## Just the Beginning

By the end of the summer we had gained valuable information about Sevier and its people, and had made solid contacts in various communities. We hope that in each community organization will begin; that point is almost reached. Once this happens, the people in the community groups can get together and form a county-wide organization.

LARRY LOCKSHIN

## THE MOVEMENT

is published monthly by the staff of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee of California.

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## SUBSCRIPTIONS:

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