

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 get some support. All the people that have children really should be on strike as well the parents. Why make your child work for low wages when you all of your life 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 should 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.

Here's how we got started.

The union started in January a group of people at a freedom school discussion got together and decided that they weren't getting anything for their work. They form a union and started paying dues. They went to other counties in Mississippi spreading the ideal.

In March the people in Shaw, Miss. about 90 people canvassed trying to get people to strike for higher wages. At that time the union didn't have a name and they didn't have papers for people to sign to go in the union. But now the union have improved a lot since this. They didn't have any way of knowing how they were going to get support then.

In April we found a Name for the union and drew up the rules and they were decided on at the state workshop. Some of the people all over the Mississippi Delta are on strike.

Shaw is the headquarter since it started in Shaw. Every month we have a state meeting. Some of the things we do at this meeting are people from every precinct give us a report on what they have been doing in their county. We have officers. We have 1325 members in the union and 350 people on strike. The way we got these many people is talking to them and showing them the point of how important is to form a union. We talk to people in the homes and on plantations at stores, churches and town.

City workshop

The city workshop was held in Shaw by the chairman with local people to

discuss what we would talk about at the Statewide workshop. We also elected committees to issue. And we selected the rules for the union.

Statewide workshop

In the Statewide workshop we had people from the following places Glenallen, Winstonville, Louise, Greenville, Batesville, Rosedale, Carroll County, Vicksburg, Thorn, and Marks, Miss.

Out of these places we have 100 people on strike in Rosedale, 68 in Glenallen and 135 in Shaw.

What we talked about

We talked about the support of the union and we adopted the same rules for the state that we had in Shaw.

We also discussed ways of getting fund for the union strikers. We decided to write letters to people everywhere and ask for help. We also talk about why it was important for people to join the union.

Offering houses

The people in the union stated they would let people live in their homes if they got thrown off of the plantation. So far none have been thrown off.

The union handed out \$50.00 from dues.

We gave \$50.00 to three union members who need it very badly. One member needed it because they were threaten to be thrown out of their house and it was beeing as a center. The second was threaten by the man she owed. And the third member and family was straving or living poverty. So that is how we use our dues to help the members.

On April 14th and 15th people from 8 counties picket the Motor Inn Hotel in Greenville. They were having a U.S. Department of Labor meeting. We were trying to get them to let us in and meet our demands. The second day they let us come in listen to speeches. Mr. Hawkins a shaw union member ask question about wages for farm work. Mrs. Hamer spoke inside the meeting the first day and she read the union forms her and 6 more people went in.

The people are on strike in other places like Greenville, Winterville, Laymant, Rosedale, Batesville, Tribbett, and Anguilla.

The most strikers we have are cotton workers that mostly what about 100% of the Negroes in Mississippi depend on.

Two maids quite jobs to join the strikers and one tractor driver which was very good.

On plantation 37 people in Issaquena county went on strike for .50 an hour and they were successful on Monday they will strike for 1.00 an hour. They only work 9 hrs. a day.

There are 9 tractor drivers on strike on a plantation in Glen Allen. On a place in Shaw they struck for morer money. Friday they found out they got a raise from 6.00 to 7.50 tractor drivers. They are planming to strike again as soon as it dries up.

The strikers started with the people who chop and pick cotton and tractor drivers and now the people on various plantations are striking.

Each town is organizing their strike and officers. The chairman in Shaw is George Shelton, Jr., Shaw.

We need help raising money so the people on strike can pay their house rent and bills.

The way we got land to raise gardens they landowner gave us a few acres to plant gardens on. The union started because the colored people weren't getting anything for their work. We will help the Negroes farmers that gave us land to raise the gardens.

The money we raise we give it to the people to pay their house rent and bills. We would like for everyone to help support the strikers.

The food we are trying to get for people are just regular food like milk, canned meat, pinto beans, butter bean, lard, white corned meal.

If you want more information write or call:

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General Delivery
Shaw, Miss. 38773
(601) 754-9831

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P. O. Box 176
Shaw, Miss. 38773
(601) 754-3751

Mrs. Nola Mae Coleman
P. O. Box 176
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If anything is sent to the strikers, please send it to Box 547, Shaw, Miss.