



the southern PATRIOT

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... what unites us as coal miners and union brothers is a thousand times more powerful than what divides us. We coal miners face the same dangers — we suffer the same hurts — and we dream the same dreams for our children — and what is true for coal miners is true for auto workers and steel workers and farm workers and all other laboring people in this country.

—Harry Patrick, international secretary-treasurer
United Mine Workers of America

Future of UMW Discussed

By RICK DIEHL

The United Mine Workers of America's forty-sixth constitutional convention just ended in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The events leading up to this landmark meeting of more than 1,000 miners are perhaps the most celebrated in the contemporary "labor movement" — at least celebrated by much of the Left and by many of the nation's rank-and-file workers in other unions and industries.

There was the Yablonski bid for power against Boyle in 1969, and his defeat and assassination. There was the formation of the Miners for Democracy (MFD) and their court cases against the Boyle regime. There was the Black Lung movement and the push from the rank-and-file for an improved mine health and safety law. And finally, there was the court victory that paved the way for the MFD challenge to Boyle's power which resulted in Boyle's sound defeat and Arnold Miller's victory in December, 1972.

THE END OF AN ERA

The fact that Miller decided to chair the meeting democratically, allowing all delegates the opportunity to have their say and vote their convictions, gained for him the respect of the delegates and the trustful influence to run the union without being haunted by the ghosts of past administrations. To that degree, the convention marks the end of an era — it laid to rest the Boyle legacy. It's now the Miller era in the UMW.

Now the question is: Can Miller make the union represent point-of-production
(Continued on page 7)



Photo by Rick Diehl



Highlander Reports

Delegation says to Virginia Governor: 'Free Wansley Now'

RICHMOND, Va. — About 100 people, black and white from 10 states, jammed the office of Governor Linwood Holton here on December 20 to demand freedom for Thomas Wansley.

Wansley is a 27-year-old black man who spent 10 years in prison on a charge of raping a white woman in Lynchburg, Virginia, in 1962. He was freed on bond last January when a federal judge overturned his conviction. He was returned to prison in mid-November after a U.S. Court of Appeals reversed the January ruling.

The delegation to the governor included representatives of 20 national human rights organizations and 12 Virginia organizations, along with a number of black elected officials in Virginia.

The group brought petitions signed by 8,000 persons across the country. They said these had been collected in the last few weeks and that thousands of signatures had been sent to the governor previously.

Walter Collins, executive director of the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF), read a joint statement from the group, which said: "We are here in behalf of all the black men who have been falsely accused of raping white women. Thomas Wansley is representative of all these victims of terror and repression. The Governor of Virginia can help to erase this stain from our country by pardoning Wansley or commuting his sentence to time served."

A delegation from Lynchburg, representing several groups which have worked 11 years for Wansley's freedom, presented a detailed position paper.

Wansley's mother, Ms. Willie Mae Thornton, made a

personal appeal that her son be freed before Christmas. Among the Lynchburg delegation was Fletcher Hubbard, a popular disc jockey and manager of a black radio station, who set out on the previous day walking the 150 miles from Lynchburg to Richmond.

The group demanded to see Governor Holton in person but was told he was out of town. They met instead with David Bradley, a special assistant to the governor in charge of pardons. Finally, Bradley agreed to set up an appointment for Wansley's mother to see the governor.

Holton had met December 19 with representatives of several Virginia organizations who presented petitions signed by 7,000 persons within the state in recent weeks. He told this group that he was considering a pardon for Wansley but could not take into account three things — the fact that Wansley is black, the possibility of his innocence, or the many petitions for his freedom.

This statement was challenged during Bradley's ses-
(Continued on page 8)

Delegation Cites Tarboro

A recent case in Tarboro, N.C., points up the importance of a re-examination of the rape charge as it has been used in the South against black men.

There on December 9, of this year, three young black men were sentenced to death on a charge of raping a white woman.

The three are Vernon Leroy Brown, 22, of Tarboro; Bobby Hines, 23, Princeville, N.C.; and Jesse Lee Walston, 23, of Washington, D.C.

They were found guilty despite the fact that a doctor and a nurse who examined the woman at Tarboro General Hospital both testified that they found no evidence that rape had occurred. The men testified that the woman asked them for a ride and submitted willingly to sexual intercourse.

They said they let the woman out at a hamburger stand where a number of people were watching. She then went to the hospital emergency room and reported that she had been raped.

The jury, which included 11 whites and one black, deliberated less than two hours.

The conviction is being appealed, and protest about the case is growing.

Some members of the national delegation in Richmond on December 20 on behalf of Thomas Wansley cited the Tarboro case as evidence that the false charge of rape against black men is not a thing of the past but is rather a recurring injustice in Southern communities.

1868: First issue of <i>The Revolution</i> , radical women's newspaper, appears.	
15 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.'S BIRTHDAY	16
1946: United Electric Strike. 1970: Knoxville 22 arrested at UT demonstration.	
22	23

The history of Southern working women, and especially of black women, has been unrecognized, unappreciated, unrecorded.

In **WOMEN AT WORK**, the SCEF calendar for 1974, we present songs, narratives, photographs that memorialize some of the sorrows, struggles and triumphs of slave women, miners' wives, mill hands — as they were, as they are.



SCEF RECIPES: A Radical Cookbook, has delicious eating ideas from SCEF supporters and staff — from soup to dessert and everything in between: breads, yogurt, lots of vegetables, many Southern dishes.

Name SCEF Calendar for 1974
(suggested donation, \$2.50.)

Address

City SCEF Cookbook
(suggested donation, \$3.00.)

State Zip I enclose donation.

Send contributions, plus 10% for postage and handling if you can, to SCEF, 3210 West Broadway, Louisville, KY 40211.

SOUTHERNERS !

What's happening in your community
That the *Patriot* ought to write about ?
Send us a note
or a story
or the name of a person to contact
to *Southern Patriot*
SCEF
3210 West Broadway
Louisville, KY 40211

THE PATRIOT COLLECTIVE

The *Patriot* collective must expand if we are to continue serving the needs of the growing peoples' movements in the South.

We need someone skilled in the technical aspects of producing a movement newspaper, and we need another roving correspondent. (These are duties that can be shared.)

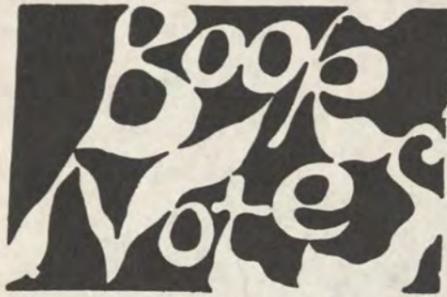
Interested folk should be willing and able to work long hours at subsistence pay. Familiarity with the Southern movement is desirable, but not essential.

If you are interested, and if you agree with the SCEF and *Patriot* principles, write to

Eileen Whalen
SCEF
3210 West Broadway
Louisville, KY 40211

and send a carbon to

Ken Lawrence
SCEF
Box 5174
Jackson, MS 39216.



Drums and Shadows is a book produced in the 30's by the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Projects Administration. Based on extensive interviews with ex-slaves living in the Georgia coastal region, the book carefully documents the survival of African cultural traditions among these people

Long out of print, *Drums and Shadows*

has recently been reissued in paperback by Anchor Books, Doubleday & Co., Garden City, N.Y., \$ 1.95!

Why Do We Spend So Much Money ? is a simple, well-illustrated guide to the outrages of the capitalist system. This easy-to-read book does for U.S. economics what *Radical America's Underhanded History of the U.S.A.* does for American history. The booklet explores systematic exploitation in the areas of housing, food, transportation (including energy "shortages"), and health care

Available for 90 cents (plus postage) from Popular Economics Press, 5A Putnam Street, Somerville, MA 02143.

Another very readable illustrated booklet is *Food Price Blackmail* available for 50 cents from United Front Press, P.O. Box 4009, San Francisco, CA 94140.

IT from Food Price Blackmail

EVERY PRICE INCREASE IS A WAGE CUT



Dallas Ban

In Dallas, the city school board has announced a new restrictive speakers policy, following a complaint that a Black

Muslim minister was allowed to speak to a high school class.

The School Superintendent explained that even before the complaint, policy already prohibited speakers from promoting any philosophy other than one of "universally accepted Judeo-Christian" values.

Notes on Women

A march to the state capitol to demand that the Equal Rights Amendment be ratified by the Georgia State Assembly is scheduled for January 12. A broad coalition of women's organizations, labor unions, political activists, students, and religious groups will participate.

Kay Kavanagh, coordinator of Georgians for the Equal Rights Amendment, said: "In 1913, five hundred women marched down Peachtree Street in Atlanta, demanding the right to vote. In 1974, we will march again for equal rights."

A workshop on **Protective Labor Legislation and the Working Woman** was held in Atlanta by Barbara McKay of the Communication Workers of America and Attorney Mary Joyce Johnson, a member of the SCEF Board.

Because Georgia has no protective laws at all, one of the conclusions was that a campaign for such laws — for men, as well as women, workers — ought to be waged.

A jury in **Memphis** freed policemen charged with murdering Elton Hayes, a young black man, in 1971. After the trial, the Women's Political Caucus called a press conference to protest. Twelve other women's organizations joined in the protest, ranging from the Memphis Welfare Rights Organization to the Volunteer Women's Round Table, Inc., of Tennessee.



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Executive Director: Walter Collins
Eastern Representatives: Lenore Hogan and Anne Lancellotti
Patriot Collective: Eileen Whalen, Ken Lawrence, Jan Hillegas, Mike McMurray

SCEF STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

SCEF is a Southwide interracial organization committed to the elimination of racism and sexual oppression; the abolition of an economic system based on the profit motive instead of on the needs of people; and the ending of imperialism — that is, the exploitation of the many by the few both in this country and across the world.

We believe that these changes will come about when powerless people organize at the grassroots; build their own democratic grassroots movements; and take control of their government, the earth's resources, and their own lives.

We believe that in the past the effectiveness of such movements in the South has been impaired by deeply rooted racism. This has kept us divided by color and ethnic identity, and has thus kept us powerless.

Therefore, the first priority of white participants in SCEF is to reach other white people, especially poor and working people. We believe that white people, in the course of their struggles, must vigorously comb at racism and racist institutions, while seeking and creating alliances with the black liberation movement around common goals.

SCEF welcomes the cooperation of all persons who agree with these principles, goals, and approaches, regardless of any differences that may exist among them on other questions.

The *Southern Patriot* is dedicated to the task of reporting the activities of people and groups across the South who are building movements that help incorporate the principles stated here — and to providing information and analysis that can help them build.

CORRECTION

An error by the printer in last month's *Patriot* resulted in an incorrect photo on the "Sounding Board" page. We had intended to have a picture of Imari Abubakari Obadele, I, president of the Republic of New Africa. In place of the correct picture, we had a photo of Chuma Askadi, also one of the RNA eleven. Our apologies to President Imari and Brother Chuma, and to our readers. Here is the picture we had intended to run:

RNA president Imari Obadele



an editorial

Return of Death Penalty

There have been many reactions by federal and local governments to the growing liberation movement in the United States. These include new criminal codes, the Omnibus Crime Bill, the perversion of the Grand Jury, and convictions by non-unanimous juries. But the most extreme way of keeping people under control through terror is the death penalty, the reinstatement of capital punishment in the United States.

SUPREME COURT DECISION

On June 29, 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed a death sentence (*Furman v. Georgia*) because the state law left it up to a judge or jury to decide whether to prescribe death or another penalty for certain crimes. The Court said that this left too much room for discriminatory sentencing.

DEATH PENALTY NOT OUTLAWED

So the death penalty was not outlawed, as many at first thought. But the decision forced legislatures and courts to follow certain guidelines in determining sentences for crimes, so that there would be the same penalty throughout a state for the same crime.

Numerous state legislatures have rewritten laws in order to retain the death penalty, giving certain crimes mandatory death sentences. Many lawyers doubt their constitutionality. And the result has been an alarming number of people sentenced to die, because, having been convicted of certain crimes, death is the only punishment that can be given.

FLORIDA WAS THE FIRST

The South traditionally has been used to spearhead campaigns of reaction. Florida was the first state to reintroduce legalized murder, with the backing of "liberal" Governor Reubin Askew. As of this writing, 20 other states have done likewise, including most of the South. Two other states reinstated it by judicial decision; in others it's still pending.

MOST ARE BLACK

Forty-four people are currently on Death Row: 29 blacks, one Native American, 14 whites; 43 men, 1 woman. In North Carolina, 15 people are sentenced to death. Florida has 7, Massachusetts 5, Georgia 3, Montana 2, and Louisiana and several other states have one

each. Figures need upward revision monthly.

The overwhelming majority of those sentenced to death are black and/or poor. And it is often the case that the death penalty is being reinstated in those states where various strata of the population — blacks, labor, intellectuals — are resisting oppression.

Florida is a good example of the latter. The organizing drive of the United Farm Workers, the impact of the Gainesville 8 and Ken Megill cases, and the growing thrust, in general, of the black liberation struggle have been met by increasing repression.

North Carolina is another state where police brutality and governmental repression have been the state's response to a large, militant black liberation movement. The Wilmington 10, the Ayden 11, etc. have all been documented in the SCEF pamphlet, *The Right to Organize*, by Carl Braden, and in past issues of the *Southern Patriot*.

15 ON DEATH ROW IN NORTH CAROLINA

The 15 persons on Death Row in North Carolina include one black woman, Mamie Lee Ward, 52 years old. Formerly on Death Row was Marie Hill, a young black woman, who's now serving life. Both women are from the same small town of Rocky Mount, N.C. Among those awaiting legal murder are three black men convicted of rape in Tarboro, N.C., recently.

The *Furman v. Georgia* decision was needed because the leeway to sentence a person to life or death has been so badly misused in our history against minorities and unpopular persons. It was won, however, by a 5-4 vote. If a justice dies or steps down, and Nixon or Ford nominates a new justice who is confirmed — the decision could be reversed.

IT'S USED IN TIMES OF CRISIS

The death penalty has been used most extensively during times of economic crisis and governmental insecurity. The cases of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, the rape trial of Willie McGee and others did not just demonstrate the immorality of lynching, legal or otherwise.

They showed the force the state can exert when it feels threatened. A mass outcry, organized and cohesive, must be raised to prevent such barbarism from being repeated.

Ira Grupper

Six Years Too Late

By MIKE McMURRAY

On November 6, 1973, the State of Maryland finally dropped its six-year-old charges of riot and arson against black organizer H. Rap Brown.

At the Ellicott City hearings, Brown's lawyer pointed out that the case should have been dismissed six years ago, when the case was fabricated for the purpose of silencing an articulate spokesman of the black movement.

Brown's ordeal began in July, 1967, when, as the newly elected chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, he was invited to speak to the black community of Cambridge, Maryland.

After two preceding years of racial strife and months of National Guard occupation, Brown's "inflammatory" statements could have added little to the black community's discontent.

But a shabby, segregated Negro school — already burned twice before — was again set afire hours after the SNCC leader left the town. The fire gave officials of Governor Spiro Agnew's regime the excuse to issue a fugitive warrant for Brown's arrest.

When Brown heard of the warrant, he arranged through his lawyer to surrender to the FBI in New York. The FBI violated the agreement, arresting him as he was leaving Washington to give himself up. They took the 24-year-old militant to Alexandria, Virginia, where he was handed over to the state police.

For the next three years Brown underwent constant harassment: travel restrictions, speech restrictions, at least 15 court fights in 15 different parts of the country — all on the basis of the Cambridge charges which are now suddenly dropped.

While the mass media painted SNCC as bloodthirsty fanatics, and Governor Agnew called Brown a "categorical jerk" and a "mad dog", evidence continued to trickle out that SNCC was not the perpetrator but the victim of a large scale conspiracy.

An unpublished report of the Kerner Commission on Civil Disorders concluded that "the 'riot' that occurred after Brown spoke had only taken place within the minds of the officials in that city."

During a 1970 trial in Belair, Maryland, the state's attorney admitted that the charges on which he was to prosecute the SNCC leader were "a fraud". Then, the circuit court judge said that he knew the state had no case. Consequently, the prosecutor was fined for contempt, and the trial was moved to Ellicott City, under another judge's jurisdiction.

Then, just as the government's case seemed about to collapse, a bomb, apparently intended for Brown, killed two other SNCC officers, Ralph Featherstone and Che Payne. Amid widespread reports of his death, Brown and other SNCC members went underground.

After dropping from sight for 18 months, Brown was wounded and captured by police in October, 1971, allegedly while taking part in the robbery of a New York bar. Brown's supporters maintain that he and a number of other armed blacks were actually making a raid on the bar because it was a center for drug pushers.

The period of Brown's disappearance seems to coincide with increasingly militant efforts of community groups to drive heroin pushers out of the ghettos. The Knapp Commission reports that the majority of the New York Police Department and most of its narcotics detectives are, to one degree or another, "crooked". It is not surprising, therefore, that activists view police not merely as ineffective, but as opponents of their campaign against dope.

Though Brown's odyssey continues in New York's Attica Prison (where he is serving 5-15 years for the "robbery"), his struggle began in the jails of the South.

Human rights organizations in the South saw very early that Rap Brown's persecution boded an ominous future for freedom and justice everywhere. They tried to spread the alarm which still may not be fully comprehended by many, despite Watergate.

In a position paper on the Rap Brown case, appearing in the March, 1968 *Southern Patriot*, leaders of six organizations warned that ". . . if the government proceeds with its apparent plan to jail and silence and crush militant black spokesmen, it is only a matter of time until white critics of government policies will be treated much the same way."

Two months earlier, Anne Braden wrote about the Rap Brown case: "This is the real importance of free speech — not just one person's right to speak, but the right of us all to hear."



What is it ?

People often ask, "What is it?" when they encounter the *Southern Patriot* logotype for the first time. The current design first appeared on the September 1969 issue. The symbol to the left of the title is a pomegranate, drawn by Peg Rigg, a talented Florida artist, teacher, and member of the SCEF board. She says it is "an ancient symbol of Hope, New Life, Growth and Rebirth. The fruit ripens and bursts open and the seeds scatter far and wide to start new life."

The issue on which this logo first appeared was the first issue of the *Patriot* printed on newsprint in its present format. The switch from heavy, glossy paper to

newsprint represented a real step forward, allowing distribution to be greatly expanded. Since that time, *Patriot* circulation has steadily increased to its current level — approximately 21,000 copies per issue.

Now we are forced to print on "fancy" paper again. Our printer is unable to obtain newsprint because of a nationwide paper shortage. This factor, along with a sharp increase in postage rates, has caused our production costs to rise significantly. We hope that our readers will be able to increase their contributions, so that we can continue to "scatter far and wide" the experiences of the growing Southern movement.

Background to Struggle in Mississippi

The Broiler Chicken Industry

By KEN LAWRENCE

The chickens that most of us eat — the young, tender, lightweight birds — are called broilers by the industry that produces them. The desirability of broilers as food animals was recognized at the turn of the century, but commercial production didn't begin until the mid thirties. In the year 1934, 34 million broilers were produced.

During the thirties and forties, the industry advanced, developing specialized techniques in breeding, hatching, feed milling, processing, and marketing. Then, following World War II, the industry began a process of consolidation, known to business people as "vertical integration." Today 95 percent of all birds marketed are produced by integrated facilities.

A typical integrated broiler company consists of the following: contract hatcheries to produce eggs, a broiler chick hatchery, a feed mill, contract broiler growers, company-owned farms, and a processing plant. These modern facilities produce more than 2½ billion birds per year.

On a per capita basis, chicken consumption has increased in the United States from 5 pounds in 1934 to 39 pounds in 1970. Other sectors of the poultry industry, such as eggs,

turkeys, etc., have grown also, though not to the same degree.

The South is the most important and the fastest growing of the areas where broilers are produced. Georgia is the number one state in poultry production. The reasons are not difficult to figure. The climate in the South, generally warmer than the rest of the country, reduces the cost of heating the chicken sheds, and feed is easily produced locally.

The industry's greatest growth coincided with the rapid mechanization of agriculture. Thousands of former field workers, forced off the land by machines that plant, cultivate, and harvest the crops, have provided a ready-made supply of cheap, unorganized labor for industries that located in the South.

But unlike other industries that have taken advantage of the South's pool of cheap labor, the broiler industry is neither "runaway" nor "marginal". The industry reached its maturity in the South, and its fate will have a great deal to do with the future of the Southern states. The men who have risen to power by owning poultry production facilities are today powerful figures in politics and banking.

During the past year and a half, the *Patriot* has focused a great deal of attention on the unfolding struggle among poultry workers in a single community — Forest, Mississippi. Forest is the seat of Scott County, the largest broiler chicken center in the state. Since May 1972, eight issues of our paper have contained articles or briefs on their struggle. Many of their problems are faced every day by working people throughout the South and throughout the United States.

IMPORTANT LESSONS

Their decisions, successes and failures, can provide important lessons for workers everywhere. Some of the problems they face are common themes in the workers' movement: Can white workers be convinced to support struggles initiated by black workers? How can they be organized? When workers decide to retain control over their union by not affiliating with an existing international union, will they wind up weak and isolated?

The situation in Forest is not unique. It is a portent of what we can expect to see in all parts of the South where modern industry has begun production in

small towns whose people were only recently expelled from agriculture. As their experience with the new situation matures, previously hidden antagonisms erupt into open struggle. Often the pace of struggle is advanced with the introduction of newer, higher speed, more exploitive production facilities.

LARGEST FOOD INDUSTRY

Mississippi ranks fifth in broiler chicken production. Poultry is the largest food industry in the state, and 88 percent of the chickens are produced for out-of-state consumption. Capital investment in the industry — in broiler houses, laying houses, breeder houses, hatcheries, feed mills, processing plants and equipment — amounts to \$250 million. Working inventories and operating capital take another \$500 million.

In 1972, Mississippi's gross income from broiler production exceeded \$124 million, an all-time record. Yet in January of 1973, poultry men complained that they weren't making enough money. During the year, millions of television viewers were treated to the sight of poultry producers drowning thousands of

chicks, symbolizing their demands for increased profits.

PEOPLE SUFFER EITHER WAY

The plant owners have a choice of two methods to increase profits through increased productivity, and both create suffering for their workers. The first method is to intensify the work load on obsolete equipment, often leading to accidents, equipment breakdowns, etc. This type of speedup was responsible for the May 1972 strike in Forest.

The other method is to junk the old facilities and replace them with new, highly automated plants. One new chicken plant in Forest, billed as "the most modern in the nation", has an output of 60,000 chickens per day and employs 85 workers. The plant it replaced produced 40,000 chickens per day and employed 175 workers. The owner has increased production by 50 per cent while throwing half of his employees out of work.

THE COMPANY OWNER

One of the people responsible for both of these situations is Forest's former mayor, Fred Gaddis. Gaddis sold his

one-third interest in Poultry Packers, Inc., the scene of the 1972 strike, for \$321,000. The new Gaddis Packing Company facility represents an investment of \$500,000. The Mississippi Poultry Workers Union represents workers in both plants.

In addition to serving as Forest's mayor for more than a decade, and owning chicken processing plants, Gaddis owns Gaddis Breeder Farms, Inc., Gaddis Hatcheries, Inc., Little Princess Foods, Inc., and a large commercial cattle ranch. He is president of Greater Business and Industrial Development Corporation, a commercial catfish hatching and growing company. He is the principal stockholder in Mississippi Coast Motels, Inc., and a director of Peoples Bank in Meridian.

THE NEWSPAPER EDITOR

Another important figure in the local ruling class is Erle Johnston, editor of the *Scott County Times*, Forest's newspaper. The *Times*, like almost all Mississippi newspapers, is strongly anti-union and pro-business. While promoting Scott County as an ideal location for new business, the paper has warned newcomers not to drive up wages by competing for the existing pool of cheap, unskilled labor.

An editorial made this explicit: "we are not seeking additional manufacturing plants that would compete in the same labor markets as our existing plants. It has been expressed often that the only new plants deserving our support and interest would be those that hire skilled and semi-skilled workers."

In addition to promoting the interests of Gaddis and other local business bigwigs, Johnston has been an important figure in state politics. During Ross Barnett's tenure as governor, he headed the State Sovereignty Commission, Mississippi's official agency to propagate segregation. (Johnston, a former president of the Mississippi Press Association, had been Barnett's publicity man in his 1959 gubernatorial campaign). At one time, the Commission heavily financed the Citizens' Council, but state support was cut after Johnston had a falling-out with the council over segregationist tactics.

RACIST FILM

In January 1961, while Johnston was the State Sovereignty Commission's publicity director, the Commission released a propaganda film, primarily aimed at the North, proclaiming the virtues of racial segregation. Governor Barnett said that the film proved that segregation was a good system for both black and white Mississippians.

The setting chosen to portray Mississippi's model segregated community was Forest. At that time, almost all the workers in the chicken plants were white — black workers were excluded. Today, the majority of workers in these plants are black women. Back then, things were pretty quiet in Forest. But for the last year and a half, Forest has been the focus of sharp class struggle.

To find out what conditions were like behind the scenes, back at the time when Yankee audiences were viewing this racist film, I interviewed a white man who was a poultry worker at the time. I asked him to tell me about the conditions of work, and about the changes that have taken place. He chooses to remain anonymous, but here are excerpts from his story.



Entrance to Southeastern Poultry Company, Forest, Mississippi.

'The longer I worked, the madder I got.'

I don't work processing chickens any more. Before I'd go back to a chicken plant, if I could find some paper wood to haul, I'd haul it. And hauling paper wood is a pretty hard job. But at least you have got time to raise up and get your breath without somebody hollering "Let's go!"

As bad as it is in there today, in the chicken plants, it was much worse back in '61 and '62. Where they have three now, there was one man on the job then, at Southeastern. And they ran a lot more chickens.

START UP AT 5 EVERY MORNING

At that time they'd start killing in the morning and they didn't have no time to quit. They'd just kill 'til they killed every chicken they caught the night before, never less than 125,000 a day. It didn't make no difference if they got off at 12 o'clock the next night, they started up at 5 the next morning, every day.

Southeastern wasn't the first chicken plant I worked at. I worked at the Cudahy plant when I started. That's what it was called then; today it's called Poultry Packers. From there to Forest Packing Company, and then to Southeastern.

I was working on the freezer line, they called it. Where they were packing those chickens in plastic bags for the army. I tied those boxes and turned around and set them five high behind me on a pallet. Then pull it all the way around to the freezer and unload it and come back and have to catch up with what they had on the roller bed.

TURN RIGHT AROUND AND GO BACK

By the time I'd get them caught up, I had the pallet loaded, so I had to turn right around and go back. And when you got back, you didn't get no break. You'd just work 'till you caught up again, and keep going.

Where they've got those tow motors and things now to work in the coolers with, we didn't have them when I worked at Cudahy. To stack those boxes in the freezer, you'd stack them by hand. You didn't have a buggy or nothing to roll them on. You toted them back there, and stacked them nine high — nine or ten

wouldn't weigh 150.

Cudahy opened up there in '51 or '52, somewhere along in there. That plant has been there a long time, part of it. There have been some new additions added on since then. I hauled live chickens there before I worked in the plant.

The truck drivers had to unload them. You unloaded them, and stacked your own coops back on the truck. When I hauled to Cudahy when they first started, you had to stack them on one of these pallet things, and they picked them up and hauled them on over here to some scales and weighed them.

They they'd haul them back and take the chickens out of your coops and bring them back. So you had to unload them, and then you had to stack the coops back on your truck. Now there are more people working on the back dock, but back then you had to do it all yourself.

Crushing ice was a job too. That 300 pound block, you couldn't chip them up in blocks where you could handle them. Split it right down the middle. If you didn't, they said you were wasting ice, that they wouldn't have enough to last all day.

If you'd come out to warm, they'd want to dock you. And you couldn't stay in there for over an hour and a half at a time. The mercury's gone out of the tube, that's how cold it was, and you couldn't turn off the circulating fans. You had to stand under them, stacking chickens.

One day the line had been on and off, all day, because of a breakdown or something. So they were still killing chickens at ten o'clock. About half the people there were women.

'YOU'RE GOING TO KILL US'

One lady said to the boss, "You're going to kill us people, working this way." And he told her, said "I don't give a damn if I kill all of you, just so I get these chickens run." That's all he said, and he turned around and left us.

I was there right over a year when they first started bringing colored people in to work at



Ken Lawrence photo

During the fifties and sixties, poultry workers in Forest were unorganized and powerless. Today the Mississippi Poultry Workers Union represents workers in three of Forest's chicken plants.

between breaks. But when a person needed to, they would just walk off to the bathroom anyhow. When they got through, they would come right back to the line.

Well every time someone would do it, they fired him, until they got so short handed they didn't have nobody to work. So then they said if the white wouldn't do it, they would get colored in there.

WOULDN'T GIVE HIM A BREAK

One white boy was pulling craws, and he needed a break. They wouldn't give him a break, and so he went to the bathroom right there on the line. Then they wanted to fire him, and he told them by God nobody would give him a break and he had to use the bathroom, and so they let him go back to work. That's how bad it was.

I was working at Cudahy when a union tried to get in up there. That was a long time ago, '55 or '56, somewhere along there. All of them were white but just a couple of colored. Everybody was scared to vote for them. I forget how many voted against.

I VOTED FOR THE UNION

They told all of them if you vote for the union you'll get fired. The union didn't fight that. I voted for the union. I told them I didn't give a God damn if I did get fired. Fire me. But nobody ever did get fired.

The reason I quit at Southeastern was, I'd been doing two or three of them's jobs up there — tying all those boxes, setting them up, hauling them to the freezer. And when it got easier, or they wasn't running chickens, I didn't work, I just took it easy.

Well they wanted to move me then, put me back there doing something else. And let someone else have my other job. And I told them I wasn't going to do it, that I'd quit before I'd do it. So they said "Just do it until we can get someone else back here."

Well the longer I worked, the madder I got. So I just walked off and punched the clock and started out. I quit three times that day before I ever got out of there. They offered me something else that was a little better.

I told them no, I didn't want nothing but my job back. Finally they said "Well we're not going to put you back up there because you walk around too much. That's my good luck if I can get up and walk around. But they don't want to see you even move, except to do your job. They just want you to stay right there, whether you're doing anything or not."

That's what it used to be like working in a chicken plant.



Ken Lawrence photo

was as high as you could get with them. And you'd do that all day long by yourself.

I'd be so tired I'd feel I couldn't tote the box across the floor, much less put it on a stack. And in the two years I worked at Southeastern, I saw many a good man go and come, because they'd put so much on him he just couldn't take it. He'd come in there weighing 200 pounds, and when he'd leave there in a week or so he

Southeastern. Before that they didn't have but one or two colored workers, like on the back dock on something. But then they got mad at the white. And they said if the white wouldn't do what they wanted, they would get colored, and they did.

The way it happened was they wouldn't let anyone go to the bathroom between breaks. They said there wouldn't be any more breaks

Quincy Case Closed

By JAN HILLEGAS

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — After two and a half years of imprisonment, the last of the Quincy Five was recently freed from false charges of murder and robbery brought in an extraordinary case of deliberate injustice.

Johnny Burns was released from Chattahoochee State Hospital in a hearing under Florida's Baker Act, which spells out a mental patient's bill of rights, and the prosecutor agreed to drop all criminal charges.

The cases of the five black men from the nearby town of Quincy followed a panic by law enforcement officials when a Leon County deputy sheriff was killed during the holdup of a grocery store outside Tallahassee in September, 1970.

Alphonso Figgers, David Charles Smith, and Dave Roby Keaton were picked up by police on suspicion of another robbery. But since a solution was needed to the deputy's murder, police tried to get the three to admit to it.

Keaton was held in jail for three days of repeated questioning with a lie detector, without being allowed to make a phone call. The lie detector "expert" told Keaton the machine had caught him lying and it could get him put in prison for the murder.

Lie detector tests are not allowed to be introduced in court, but Keaton didn't know that. "When they brought up the question about the electric chair, it really blew my mind," he said.

Keaton decided to confess because he was certain he could clear himself at the trial. He was pressured into naming others who supposedly had been involved with him.

Johnny Frederick and Johnny Burns, plus Keaton, Figgers and Smith, were charged with the robbery-murder.

Police intimidation was so great that a sixth man "confessed" to the murder even though he was at work in New Jersey at the time.

Keaton and Frederick were tried and convicted of murder by an all-white jury from which opponents of capital punishment had been removed. Keaton was sentenced to die, and Frederick, who had no previous record, got life in prison.

Then an investigator overheard an underworld conversation which indicated that three Jacksonville men had committed the robbery-murder. Fingerprints confirmed the identification, and the three were indicted and later convicted.

Incredibly, that did not end the prosecution of the Quincy Five. Charges were dropped against Figgers for lack of evidence; but Smith was tried for the murder by an all-white jury. Protest to the governor of Florida and to local officials helped create a climate in which an innocent verdict was possible, and Smith was freed.

The Florida Supreme Court ordered new trials for Keaton and Frederick, but prosecutors and the state judge refused to grant bail for the waiting period.

Last summer, a few days before the scheduled retrials, charges were dropped. Keaton was returned to Raiford State Prison to serve time on a different conviction, and Frederick went free after 2½ years in jail.

The case of the Quincy Five clearly

shows the functioning of racism in our society.

It shows that criminal investigation and court procedures do not protect innocent individuals from prosecution and imprisonment.

And it shows how much bad faith can be crammed into one case, when it serves the interests of those able to use the power of the police and courts.

The most blatant injustice was the continued prosecution of the Quincy 5 after the guilt of three other men had been established.

But also striking was the lack of evidence against the Quincy Five other than the forced "confessions" and statements from witnesses. Only after two of the trials were finished was it disclosed that witnesses made incorrect identifications at lineups but were still put on the stand against Keaton and Frederick. And pre-trial "discussions" with sheriff's deputies also influenced the testimony of witnesses.

The unjust prosecutions were designed to pacify those upset by the killing of a sheriff's deputy, even to the point of accusing up to nine men of a crime admittedly done by only three. At the trial of one of the Jacksonville men, an outrageous story was put forth, saying that eight men committed the crime with two getaway cars, in contradiction to eye witness testimony.

A THREAT TO THE STATUS QUO

The Quincy Five were picked for special treatment by police because they symbolized a threat to the status quo of their community.

Quincy is a town of 40,000, 65% black, located about twenty miles west of Tallahassee, in a county with a traditional plantation style of life. The Five had been active in voter registration activities during the three years before their arrests.

In response to letters from around the country protesting jail treatment of the Five, the general counsel to Florida's Gov. Reubin Askew wrote that, "The allegations of mistreatment are unfounded. These inmates are being treated in a proper manner."

Burns was especially subject to police searches without reason. After his arrests, he was brutalized by jail guards. A steel cell door was slammed on his foot. After a week without medical attention, gangrene set in, and his big toe was amputated. In the middle of the night he was taken away to Chattahoochee State Hospital, then declared "insane". He never confessed.

It is to the credit of black citizens of Quincy, defense attorneys, and others who protested over the past three years that the Five are finally free.

Letters Needed

Support from Patriot readers is needed to help prevent extradition to Alabama of a black liberation leader.

Ronnie Williams was arrested near Birmingham in September of 1970 after sheriff's deputies fired into a house where he and four others were. They had returned to the home, owned by a woman about to be evicted, after a morning of circulating information in the community about her problem. (See March 1971 Patriot.)

Though it was proved that the only shots were fired by the deputies, Williams and Wayland Bryant, leaders in the Alabama Black Liberation Front, were given five years for "assault".

After his appeal was turned down by the U.S. Supreme Court, Williams fled to Oregon, where he was recently arrested.

Williams and his friends fear for his life if he is returned to Alabama prisons, because officials have been so clearly 'out to get' the A.B.L.F.

The extradition hearing is January 7, so please write immediately and ask Oregon's governor not to extradite Williams. The address is

Gov. Tom McCall
Governor's Office
Salem, Oregon

NEWS BRIEFS

In Kentucky, the conviction of Darryl Blackmore for possession of a sawed-off shotgun has been overturned by the U.S. Court of Appeals. Blackmore, the only one of the Louisville 7 to be convicted of any illegality, is serving time for armed robbery.

In West Virginia, the First Annual People's Convention was held in Kanawha Valley. The convention was sponsored by the West Virginia Welfare Rights Organization.

Representatives from Movement for Economic Justice, Black Lung Association, Citizens for Social and Economic Justice, Black Appalachian Commission, and others participated.

For two days workshops were held discussing tax reform, education, health, and the elderly. At the final session, all

the groups got together to work out ways of helping each other.

Featured speakers were Don West of the Appalachian South Folklore Center in Pipestem, West Virginia, and Father James Groppi from Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

West gave a talk on Appalachian history and heritage; Father Groppi, a longtime Welfare Rights activist, stressed the need for unity between working people and welfare recipients to fight for common goals.

In Atlanta, a judge charged two policemen with "involuntary manslaughter" following the death of a black man being held in the Atlanta City Jail.

A county grand jury, which will determine if there is enough evidence for a trial, may change the charge to murder.

Virgil Williams was apparently killed by a chokehold which several white policemen swore is taught at police academies for subduing unruly suspects. Black police told the *Great Speckled Bird* that they knew of no such training.

LABOR SHORTS

In Baltimore, longshoremen continue their pickets and refusals to unload Rhodesian chrome.

In the past, black members of International Longshoremen's Union Local 333 had boycotted Rhodesian ore, but the companies had always found enough all-white crews to do the job.

Last December, however, a ship was sent back to Africa with half its load of chrome still on board when all of Local 333 honored the picket line.

In addition to longshoremen and political activists, the Baltimore pickets have included farm workers, meat cutters, hospital workers, postal workers and others.

The first dockworkers' boycott of chrome from the white racist regime of Rhodesia occurred at Burnside, Louisiana, in March, 1972.

In Atlanta, a Federal District Court ruled that state mental institutions must pay patients who do work. The judge said, "the economic reality test would indicate an employment relationship rather than a mere therapeutic exercise."

In Hot Springs, Ark., the International Woodworkers of America have won expanded promotion opportunities for women and nonwhite workers. A federal court ruled that a state law requiring overtime payments to women after 8 hours must apply to men under the Civil Rights Act ban on sex discrimination.

In Greensboro, North Carolina, employees of the Industries of the Blind have voted to form an independent local. The decision came after several years of wildcat strikes for better conditions, coupled with the refusal of the National Labor Relations Board to allow them to affiliate with an international union.

In Louisville, eight black workers who staged a 6-hour sit-down at the P. Lorillard Tobacco Co. agreed to plead guilty to state charges in exchange for suspended sentences of 6 months and 5 years probation. The sit-down last August was to demand more black hiring and better conditions.

Things Not To Do

1. Don't buy grapes. Don't buy wines from Gallo, Modesto, Franzia Bros., or White River Farms. Don't buy lettuce unless it has the United Farm Workers union label.



2. Don't buy Campbell's soups with oysters or clams.
3. Don't buy Farah pants.

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Miners' Convention

(Continued from page 1)

insurgency, or will the new leadership honestly and democratically repress and channel the insurgents into the narrowest notions of trade unionism and collective bargaining?

While still a candidate, Harry Patrick (now the union's secretary-treasurer) used to say that if the Miners for Democracy was successful at the polls, it would lead the UMWA back into the mainstream of the American labor movement. Recognizing that the mainstream was nearly as polluted as the UMWA under Tony Boyle, many of us hoped that a re-formed UMW would be a tugboat in the American labor movement. It still is not clear whether the UMW is doing more pushing than pulling, but one thing does seem clear: The union, under its new leaders, is an "item" on other trade unionists' and politicians' lists of those to be concerned with.

THE CONSTITUTION

The most important aspect of the convention, at least in terms of the long-range future of the rank-and-file's role in the UMWA, has to do with the changes in the old constitution that will safeguard the advances made in making the union democratic and controlled at the critical points and moments by the membership.

THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

Perhaps the telling point about the strength of the rank-and-file in their own union organization has to do with their constitutional right to strike — that is, to employ their most potent weapon against their bosses — and the amount of support their union's officers and staff are compelled to provide in the event of strikes.

There is a slight problem in understanding the strike issue in the coal industry. Namely, there is a high incidence of wildcat strikes among miners, which are prohibited by the contract, under which the union's leaders are bound to get the men back to work.

Talk of strikes in most unions refers to the termination of the contract. In the UMWA, strikes occur automatically and on the basis of tradition more than legality when the contract expires ("No Contract, No Work"). Although the contract disallows strikes during the term of the contract, strikes occur and are honored by the rank-and-file as long as a picket line is present, regardless of the officers' attempts to get the men back to work.

It should be noted that Eli Goldston, chairman of Eastern Gas and Fuel/Eastern Associated Coal, said that he favored Boyle's ouster by a union reform candidate because miners would not return to work during wildcats when encouraged to do so by Tony Boyle, whom they didn't respect. The companies' sentiment seemed to be that if the rank-and-file were led by an honest set of leaders, those leaders would be able to persuade the men to work out their problems with management within the confines of the contracts' provisions.

AUTONOMY

The delegates voted to leave the right to call strikes or to authorize strikes in the hands of the international union.

In addition, they voted to permit the International Executive Board (IEB) to suspend a local or district's autonomy for 180 days for corrupt practices and/or to "assure performance of collective bargaining agreements or other duties as a bargaining representative". That could mean the IEB can remove a local's officers and take over the operation of a local that goes on strike for some local issue.

(For example, when a better job opens up, the contract requires the job to go to the man with the most seniority. Companies will often give a dangerous and skilled job, such as miner operator, to a younger man rather than the man with seniority. The miners might then have a wildcat strike.)

To this issue, delegate Steve Shapiro said:

"I think in this entire convention we have not devoted enough discussion and enough attention to what I believe is a trend that we, the United Mine Workers, are facing, and that is concerning the right to strike. . . ."

"It is one thing for there to be a law on the books and for us to obey them, and it is another thing for us to underwrite and double sign all this stuff, and put ourselves in a further and further bind."

"Without the right to strike I am afraid, even at a local level, our goose is cooked."

"In our mine our management as much as says, 'We are sending everything



Photo by Eileen Whalen

up to the grievance procedure. We are not going to settle with you because we have got a much better chance up there than dealing with the issue."

"We heard last week Mr. I.W. Abel of the Steelworkers give a long talk which included that he had signed for the Steelworkers, not only doing away with the right to strike over grievances, but they can't even strike now over a contract. . . ."

"If we have the right to strike, we are going to have to strike much less than if we do away with this and the companies know they can walk all over us."

Actually, this article is an improvement over the old constitution, which allowed the international the power to suspend autonomy indefinitely. But it certainly is not in keeping with the spirit of Miller's words about democracy and turning the union back over to the rank-and-file.

THE STRIKE FUND

If and when a strike occurs at the international level, neither the international nor district officers and their staffs (except the clerical staff, which is organized in their own international union) will be paid their regular salaries, but will live on the same strike benefits that the membership receives.

But the establishment of a strike fund was turned down, meaning that miners will have to survive a strike without income from the union as they have in the past. Supposedly, this will mean that the officers and staff will do the same thing.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The rank-and-file now will have more direct input into the collective bargaining process at both the contract formulation and ratification ends of the process.

A District Conference comprised of elected representatives from every local will pass miners' recommendations on to the Negotiating Committee. Once the negotiators arrive at what they believe to be the best contract, they submit it back to the Bargaining Council.

If it is approved, it is then presented back to the rank and file. District meetings will be held to explain the contract, plus local meetings if necessary. It will be the job of the district president and the other officers and staff to promote the acceptance of the contract to the rank and file.

One of the main topics in the contract discussion was that future contracts should be written in layman's language so that any working miner can represent himself in contract disputes.

be at the top of the list of demands — not to be compromised away and perhaps the reason for a long strike.

The convention was warned that the Fund will be unable to handle more than one or two months' benefits if a long strike occurs. As long as miners mine coal, the Fund is supplied with money for on-going benefits; when a strike occurs, if the Fund has no money, then benefits are cut off. These benefits include hospital and medical plans, as well as \$150 a month for pensioners.

OTHER RESOLUTIONS

— The collective bargaining committee made two recommendations to curb overtime. One would prohibit any overtime while a single worker in a mine was laid off. Another would discourage overtime by requiring double pay for Saturday, triple for Sunday and quadruple for holidays.

— A resolution was passed to permanently move the UMWA headquarters out of Washington, D.C., to a location in mining country.

— On the question of racism there was no programmatic focus, but the delegates did reaffirm the anti-discrimination clause in the union's constitution.

It provides for expulsion or other punishment for any member who discriminates "against a union member because of creed, color, nationality or sex."

— In contrast to the mild response that met I.W. Abel's speech about the Steelworkers' no strike clause, Cesar Chavez's talk about the struggle of farm workers to organize and to combat the company unionism of the Teamsters received great support. The delegates passed the hat among themselves and then voted to contribute an additional \$10,000 from the union's treasury to the farmworkers strike.

POLITICAL EDUCATION

The entire convention reflected the unions' idea of "political education". There were labor movies, mountain music (including that provided by Hazel Dickens, Alice and Mike Seeger, and Florence Reece), there were giant blow-up photographs by Earl Dotter of rallies, miners at work, and newspaper headlines of the union's militant history.

Perhaps the major form of education came from the speakers. Many of the speakers advocated the impeachment of Richard Nixon. Later a motion was made to ask for Nixon's resignation, but it came at the wrong moment, when other important business was being considered, so it failed to pass, although clearly the delegates favored such a resolution.

Political education in the UMWA means pretty much what it means in other unions, particularly the AFL-CIO's political arm, the Committee On Political Education (COPE). It means encouraging pro-labor (union) candidates for public office and pro-labor legislation, plus informing the rank-and-file about "the issues" as they arise within the governmental/political process.

The UMWA's political arm is being called the Coal Miner's Political Action Committee (COMPAC) and is headed by West Virginia State Senator Robert Nelson. Nelson, a native of West Virginia, is the former aide to his state's Congressman Ken Hechler ("the coal miners' congressman"), and is the chairman of the Senate Education Committee. Nelson's politics, like those of the union's elected leaders and much of the staff brought over from the MFD campaign, are basically populist, blended with straight liberal trade unionism.

The difficulty for COMPAC and for the union's leaders themselves will be the contradiction between liberal legislative and trade union demands on the one hand and rank-and-file militance on the other.

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HEALTH AND SAFETY

During the course of the convention, almost daily a telegram would be handed to Arnold Miller, who would then stop the convention and ask a moment of silence for a miner who had just been killed at work.

One of the most carefully prepared committee reports had to do with safety, and while most of the convention was devoted to only making suggestions about safety for the next contract, several resolutions passed calling for rank-and-file representation on the boards of directors of hospitals and clinics that receive reimbursement from the union's Welfare and Retirement Fund.

Vice President Mike Trbovich spoke about safety:

"In 1971, 181 men were killed in the mines; in 1972, 157; and in ten months this year, 116 men have been killed. Three to four thousand coal miners die every year because of black lung, because the law is not being enforced, because we are not getting cooperation from the federal and state agencies."

THE WELFARE AND RETIREMENT FUND

Increasing royalty rates will be only one of several contract demands that will raise the cost to the companies of producing coal. It is one issue that may

Angola Prison Struggle

The Angola prison plantation stretches out over 25,000 acres of fine bottom land, which yields a rich harvest of cane. The fields are full of men, almost all black, who work for 10-12 hours a day, at 2 cents an hour. The overseer stands with a shotgun perched on his hip while he mops his brow.

Many of the guards are Klan members, and proud to say so. If you start some trouble, they can throw you into solitary, where you drink water out of a tin cup and have nothing but a rusty bucket for a toilet — with no tissue paper. Or they can have one of their boys “turn you out” (rape you) while they watch and grin. Or they can shoot you in an “escape attempt”, or let someone who has it in for you know that they’ll be looking the other way should something happen.

The Angola State Prison is the prison where inmates Albert Woodfox, Herman Wallace, Gilbert Montegut, and Chester Jackson — the Angola Four — had been the moving force in petition campaigns and sitdown strikes to compel the prison administration to improve the prison food, to reduce the work week from 92 hours at 2 cents an hour to a reasonable length, and to set up a system for airing grievances.

Because of their efforts to improve conditions, Albert Woodfox has been convicted of murdering a guard and the other three are awaiting their trial in January on the same charge.

THE EVENTS

On April 17, 1972, kitchen employees at Angola State Prison peacefully refused to continue working their killing hours, serving food which is barely edible. Warden Henderson arrived to negotiate — along with 50

guards wielding clubs and iron pipes. Much to his surprise, the prisoners refused to give in. They told him they would rather die than compromise. Realizing his failure to scare them, the warden agreed to their demands.

That morning after breakfast, a guard was found stabbed to death. A reign of terror began. Prisoners were beaten and gassed. Two hundred were rounded up and thrown into solitary confinement. Attempting to sow racial disunity, prison officials released white prisoners from solitary and locked up black prisoners in their places.

Two days later the indictments came against the four young black men from New Orleans. The evidence was so badly thrown together that even Kilbourne, then District Attorney, registered an embarrassed protest.

THE FIRST TRIAL

Albert Woodfox's case was tried first. The State's only “eye witness” had earlier stated that he had been in the blood plasma plant at the time of the slaying; he explained that this was an alibi he had used to protect himself from suspicion. Defense witnesses saw the Four at breakfast at the same time.

Other inmates say that prison officials offered them deals if they would lie and testify against the Angola Four, and it is likely that the “eye witness” is being given “special favors”.

The other star witness for the prosecution claimed to have seen Woodfox leaving the dormitory right after the killing. He is entirely blind in one eye, has a cataract in the other, and had to be led to the witness stand.

The State's final major piece of evidence against Woodfox was a green army fatigue jacket and a pair of lace-up shoes. These contained such small amounts of blood that the blood could not be typed or identified. Woodfox is accused of stabbing Miller 32 times and only getting a few specks of blood on his clothing.

The identifiable bloody fingerprints found on the dormitory door where Miller was killed fitted neither the four defendants nor the slain guard. But prison officials did not bother to check the fingerprints against any other inmate in the prison — they had already found their targets.

The jury found Woodfox guilty.

THE GROWING SUPPORT

The defense succeeded in overturning the original indictments on grounds of jury selection. On September 21, supporters, white and black, came to the new trial arraignment of the remaining three men.

The judge barred supporters from the courtroom while the arraignment was heard. They waited outside, covered by guards with machine guns. Black residents testified that they knew the Four could not get a fair trial in the parish, where Angola dominates the economy. Woodfox's jury had been all white, in a parish that is half black. Many of the people on the jury were related to policemen and prison guards.

The judge apparently did not like all the publicity his proceedings were getting. He remanded the case of Montegut, Jackson, and Wallace to East Baton Rouge Parish for a January trial.

Supporters of the Four saw this as a victory which would enable them to bring the case before more people, since Baton Rouge is a larger and more central city. The Southwest Amnesty Conference, held in Baton Rouge in December, chose the case of the Angola Four as its priority, in an effort to bring national attention to cases of political repression.

The mothers of the men have formed a Committee to Free the Angola Four. They have cooked enough dinners and sold enough raffle tickets to hire two lawyers. But there is not even enough money for the basic court costs.

Legal defense takes a great deal of money. Contributions, large or small, are desperately needed. If you can send a check, or if you would like more information, in the form of a clear, concise pamphlet, write to:

Committee to Free the Angola Four
1719 Polymnia Street
New Orleans, LA 70131.

AMNESTY CONFERENCE

BATON ROUGE, La. — On December 7 and 8 the Southwest Regional Conference on Amnesty for Political Prisoners and War Resisters met here.

In addition to workshops on amnesty and on political prisoners/prisoners of war/war resisters, participants heard speeches by Brother Akinsegun of the Republic of New Africa; Queen Mother Moore of the Universal Association of Ethiopian Women; Carl Braden of the Southern Institute for Propaganda and Organizing; Henry Schwarzschild of the American Civil Liberties Union; Robert Williams, a defense attorney in the Baton Rouge Muslim trial; and Virginia Collins of SCEF.

The conference ended by electing a committee to coordinate activities to free the Angola Four in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Jackson, Mississippi.



Danny Lyon/LNS

ANGOLA FOOD STRIKE

Inmates of C.C.R. — the solitary confinement section — of Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola began a food strike in late November to “prompt” the Director of the Louisiana Department of Corrections to “eradicate the following particular cruelties which are forced upon us.”

A major request was the removal of a particularly brutal correctional officer, Red Baudine. They charged Baudine with refusing medical treatment, cursing and threatening bodily injury, and numerous unprovoked attacks on prisoners.

A statement of grievances sent to the state corrections director and to Warden C. Murray Henderson quotes the U.S. Civil Commission on Minimum Standards of Civil and Human Rights for Inmates in Correctional Institutions. The prisoners are asking compliance with the Commission's standards regarding meaningful employment under healthful and safe conditions with adequate remuneration; adequate and proper medical and health services; reasonable visitation rights and regulations; educational opportunities; and recreation.

A letter from prisoners to potential supporters states that they have “refused to consume the inedible food as a token to have the dehumanizing conditions of our total environment transformed.”

‘Free Wansley’

(Continued from page 1)

sion with the national delegation by the Rev. Milton Reid, pastor of New Calvary Baptist Church in Norfolk and representatives of the Interdenominational Foundation for Community Organizing (IFCO).

“I hope I heard wrong what the governor is reported to have said yesterday,” Reid said. “During the past four years Governor Holton's administration has provided much hope to the black people in Virginia. If he fails to act now on the Wansley case, these hopes will be destroyed.” Holton leaves office January 12.

A young black woman from Virginia spoke up and said: “How can the governor say he won't consider the fact that Wansley is black when that's why he was sent to prison?”

Mrs. Sallye Davis, of Birmingham, Alabama, brought a message from her daughter, Angela Davis. Several white women spoke of the symbolic importance of the Wansley case in destroying the myths about white womanhood that have enslaved white women as they oppressed black men.

Tom Gardner of the Center for United Labor Action brought a message from black and white workers of Local 26 of the Distributive Workers of America. He said many white workers, like white women generally, are recognizing how they have been used and misused in the oppression of blacks by the

powerful few who rule the South.

Queen Mother Moore, founder and president of the Universal Association of Ethiopian Women, spoke for that group. The Rev. Ben Chavis spoke for the Commission on Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ. Bernard Lee, a native Virginian, spoke for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Maurice Barbosa, aide to Rep. John Conyers of Michigan, brought appeals from Conyers and other members of Congress. A group from New York brought a statement signed by prominent people in that area.

The delegation stressed that freedom for Wansley would help other black men falsely accused of raping white women. They called particular attention to the case of James Carrington, now serving a 75-year sentence in Virginia; and three young black men recently sentenced to death in Tarboro, N.C.

The national delegation was organized by SCEF and the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, in cooperation with the Virginia Prisoners Solidarity Committee, the Committee to Free Thomas Wansley and James Carrington, and the Wansley Defense Fund in Lynchburg.

The delegation urged people everywhere to continue to write Governor Linwood Holton, State Capitol, Richmond, VA 23219.