

Thursday, July 30, 1964

More than 35 New York City school teachers, members of local 2, American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO known as the United Federation of Teachers, are teaching in Mississippi Freedom Schools this summer, according to Richard Parrish, AFT vice president who recently made a tour of what some observers term "the police state."

"Serving without pay and under the constant threat of violence, union minded teachers are tutoring educationally starved Negro high school students and adults specifically in English, Public Speaking, Science, Mathematics, Foreign Languages, Typing, Sewing, Arts and Crafts as well as citizenship, Negro History, and Voter Registration," he reported.

Mr. Parrish pointed out that The Freedom Schools opened July 2, 1964, just a little over two weeks after the disappearance of their staff workers Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner. In spite of consequent security measures and tensions student registration zoomed to unexpected heights. In Hattiesburg alone it went over 600 for the first three week sessions.

"Nothing seems to stop them," he continued. Under the coordinated directions of the Council of Federated Organizations, centralized in Jackson, twenty five Freedom Schools span the state of Mississippi from Holley Springs in the North to Gulfport in the South; from Greenville in the west to Meridian in the east.

"What impressed me most in the eleven locations I visited was the enthusiasm and interest of the students who ranged anywhere in their teens to their seventies; the concrete evidences of Negro History being appreciated; the many adults learning to read for the first time in their lives; the voter registration

program; and the total commitment of teachers and students to a rigorous schedule which began at 9:00 a.m. and ended at 10:00 p.m. It overwhelms me just to recall it.

"In my opinion the program, even at the midpoint and in spite of hardships and material shortages, must be considered a success; its impact will be felt all over the state. I doubt if the "Magnolia State" will ever be the same after the long hot summer of 1964."

UFT coordinators of the Mississippi Freedom School effort are Mrs. Norma Becker and Miss Sandra Adickes. Both served with the AFT Prince Edward County Education project last summer in Virginia.

In referring to the passage of the Civil Rights Bill, AFL-CIO President George Meany declared that the measure "represents a challenge to American Society." In no state in the United States is the challenge so clear and the support of the trade union movement so needed as in Mississippi today. That the American Federation of Teachers has responded to this call is evidenced by the fact that teachers from the states of Washington, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Michigan have joined their colleagues from New York. For example, the director of the largest Freedom School operation situated in Hattiesburg is Mr. Arthur Reese, of the Detroit Federation of Teachers, Local 231 of the AFT," Vice President Parrish said.

For further information

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