

NEWS AND ACTION

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

MISSISSIPPI STATE OFFICE

N. A. A. C. P.

1072 West Lynch Street
Jackson, Mississippi
Phone: 3-6906

April 11, 1958

Medgar W. Evers
Field Secretary

REGISTRATION AND VOTING

The month of March brought in a number of events in our struggle for first-class citizenship. For the first time in the history of the State of Mississippi a suit was filed in Federal Court by a Negro minister, Rev. H. D. Darby, in an effort to declare the unconstitutionality of the rigid voting restrictions that are applied against Negro Mississippians when they attempt to exercise their constitutional rights as Americans.

Rev. Darby was among some 1200 Negro citizens of Jeff-Davis County who, through wilful and wanton prejudice, were disqualified as registered voters, largely through the efforts of the White Citizens Councils of Jeff-Davis County.

Rev. Darby, and others similarly situated, have made numerous attempts to register since their names were stricken from the poll books in 1956, but in no instances were they permitted to re-register. The only alternative left to Rev. Darby and others was to seek remedy in the courts. With the assistance of the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Department the first civil rights suit was filed.

MITCHELL SPEAKS

As a follow-up to the filing of the petition in Federal Court, a statewide mass meeting was called in Jackson, Sunday, March 30, at which time Clarence Mitchell, Director of the Washington Bureau, gave a very stirring and informative address. In attendance were some 1500-2000 persons, and representatives from three other organizations - The Regional Council of Negro Leadership, Mississippi Progressive Voters League and the Ministerial Improvement Association of Mississippi. The meeting proved to be one of the most successful we have had in the state.

We want to thank each of you for contributing to the success of this meeting and may we urge you to go to your circuit clerk and attempt to register.

FUND RAISING

As you know our state budget for 1958 is \$17,825.00, and in order that we can function to our capacity to the extent that we can make democracy work here in Mississippi, it will be necessary that we receive these funds. Therefore, use every possible avenue to bring in your branch quota. Let the people know that we are not taking their money as the White Citizens Councils plan to do and fight them with it, but the money that is given to the N.A.A.C.P. will be used in their behalf. We are moving now, let's all join this freedom train and arrive at our destination together.

Remember the Mother of the Year Contest, whereby your branch can raise most of its funds, and also entitle the winner to a free trip to our National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio. Begin work on this program immediately. It should prove most profitable to you. If more patron lists are needed request them from this office.

MEMBERSHIPS

Our membership quota this year should easily be reached, but only if we get out and work. The Laurel Branch N.A.A.C.P. did an exceptional job with their membership last year, when more than 300 members were enrolled. However, Jackson has indicated that the few members Laurel got last year will be but a smithering to what Jackson will get in 1958. Of course, for my money, there are other branches that bear watching -- Gulfport, Columbus, Clarksdale, Vicksburg, Cleveland, Florence, Meridian, McComb, and yes, even Amite County. So look out Laurel and Jackson!!!!

MAY 17TH CELEBRATION

Each branch is expected to celebrate the May 17, 1954 Decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, either on the seventeenth, or a day before or after. Let us hear from you in this regard.

YOUTH COUNCILS

Each branch is hereby requested to organize a Youth Council in order that your leadership will not die, but will continue to grow and be of benefit to your county and state.

INTEGRATION

The Field Secretary, Medgar W. Evers, was on his return trip from the Southeast Regional Meeting in Greensboro, North Carolina, March 11, when he was attacked by a white man, because he, Mr. Evers, refused to move from the front of the bus to the rear. The bus was enroute from Meridian to Dallas, Texas via Jackson, Mississippi. Despite attempts of the Police Department of Meridian, Mississippi to persuade him to take the "customary seating pattern", (rear seat), this passenger remained seated on the very front seat of the bus where he rode, even after having been attacked, ninety-three (93) miles to Jackson without moving. Mr. Evers indicated that he was not trying to stir up trouble, but since he had bought a ticket and paid the same fare as the others paid he felt he should ride where he chose, and that he did.

NATIONAL CONVENTION IN CLEVELAND, OHIO - JULY 6-13

