

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE by the
Freedom School Students of
St. John's Methodist Church,
Palmer's Crossing, Hattiesburg, Miss.

In this course of human events, it has become necessary for the Negro people to break away from the customs which have made it very difficult for the Negro to get his God-given rights. We, as citizens of Mississippi, do hereby state that all people should have the right to petition, to assemble, and to use public places. We also have the right to life, liberty and to seek happiness.

The government has no right to make or to change laws without the consent of the people. No government has the right to take the law into its own hands. All people as citizens have the right to impeach the government when their rights are being taken away.

All voters elect persons to the government. Everyone must vote to elect the person of his choice; so we hereby state that all persons of twenty-one years of age, whether black, white, or yellow, have the right to elect the persons of their choice; and if these persons do not carry out the will of the people, they have the right to alter or abolish the government.

The Negro does not have the right to petition the government for a redress of these grievances:

- For equal opportunity.
- For better schools and equipment.
- For better recreation facilities.
- For more public libraries.
- For schools for the mentally ill.
- For more and better senior colleges.
- For better roads in Negro communities.
- For training schools in the State of Mississippi.
- For more Negro policemen.
- For more guarantee of a fair circuit clerk.
- For integration in colleges and schools.

The govern . . . has made it possible for the white man to have a mock trial in the case of a Negro's death.

The government has refused to make laws for the public good.

The government has used police brutality.

The government has imposed taxes upon us without representation.

The government has refused to give the Negroes the right to go into public places.

The government has marked our registration forms unfairly.

We, therefore, the Negroes of Mississippi assembled, appeal to the government of the state, that no man is free until all men are free. We do hereby declare independence from the unjust laws of Mississippi which conflict with the United States Constitution.