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AID FOR NEW REGISTERED
NEGROES IS BEING SOUGHT

By Charles M. Hills
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The Negro Freedom Democratic Party filed suit Saturday to postpone municipal elections in Sunflower county until October and said it will file suits Monday making the action statewide.

The actions seek to call off the May 11 voting and set the elections for October, so that Negroes, hoping to get blanket qualifications under the new Voting Rights Bill in Congress, will have opportunity to register, vote and even seek office as qualified electors.

Circuit Clerk Cecil Cambell, of Indianola, was served a federal restrainer pending action by the Northern District Federal Court at Oxford before U.S. District Judge Claude F. Clayton.

Plaintiffs are members of the Freedom Democratic Party, including Fannie Lou Hamer, Roselle Giles, Annie Mae King, Marie R. Weeks, and Cora Johnson, all of Sunflower County, acting on behalf of themselves and all other Negro residents of Sunflower County.

CO-DEFENDANTS

Gov. Paul Johnson, Atty. Gen. Joe T. Patterson and Sec. of State Herber Ladner, all members of the State Election Commission are named as co-defendants in the case.

Patterson said here Saturday that he has been served a subpoena and that a federal agent was enroute to Pearl River County to serve the secretary of state, who is visiting there.

It was not known whether Gov. Johnson had accepted service.

Members of the Municipal elections commissions and municipal Democratic committees in Ruleville, Drew, Indianola, Moorhead, Inverness, Sunflower, Rome, and Doddsville, were being served subpoenas.

Complaining that Negroes have been prevented from registering in time to vote in the coming May and June municipal elections in Sunflower county, the bill asks a number of concessions that would prevent carrying out the regular Democratic primaries and general election in June.

Under Mississippi law, the first primary for municipal election is May 11, second primary election May 18, and the general election June 8. Newly elected officers would begin terms July 1.

INJUNCTION

Federal Judge Clayton is asked to issue an injunction in favor of the Negroes suspending the above elections, with the court fixing a new date in October, 1965.

It is cited that Negroes have been deprived of the right to register and vote.

Further, the bill of complaint charges that unless the court acts, and, the present election laws rule, the Negroes will have to live under "minority" rule for another four years.

The bill further asks that Negroes or others who register to vote prior to Sept. 30 this year, be allowed to vote in the proposed October elections.

It is also asked of the federal court that candidates for city office be able to qualify up until 14 days prior to the proposed October elections.

Both registrations and qualification deadlines have been passed for municipal elections under Mississippi law.

The bill asks that any poll tax requirements be waived and that those paying poll taxes prior to Sept. 30 this year be allowed to vote in municipal elections.

Under requests of the bill of complaint, the first primary election would be held three weeks prior to the general election date in October.

FIVE DAYS

Any person who registers within five days before the proposed general election would be allowed to vote.

Once the regular primary elections and general election are waived, present municipal officers in the eight Sunflower county towns would continue to serve until an election is held, but, under the direction of federal referees.

The federal court would be authorized to require the governor to direct the suspension of Sunflower municipal elections and refuse to issue commissions to election commissioners in the eight respective towns in the county, as well as enjoin elections.

Civil rights attorneys from New York and New Jersey signed the bill of complaint, including Arthur Kinoy, Ben Smith, and Bruce Weltzer of New York and Morton Stavis of Newark.

Doddsville is the home of U.S. Senator James O. Eastland, who was responsible for citing Stavis as lawyer for alleged subversives.

The letter appeared in Jackson several weeks ago in connection with attempts to unseat Mississippi's five Congressmen.

Atty. Gen. Patterson said that the new efforts of the civil rights group are a continuation of harassing attacks upon the people of this state.

"If they were not taken seriously by the federal government," Patterson said, "the whole series would be ridiculous."