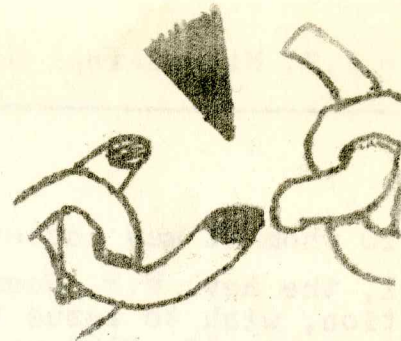




MISSISSIPPI NEWSLETTER



Number Forty-Four - Box 120, Tougaloo, Ms 39174 - January 19, 1968

Rev. R L T Smith runs for Congress

Rev. Robert L.T. Smith of Jackson was chosen at a meeting Wednesday to be a candidate for John Bell Williams' seat in Congress. A special election will be held in the Third Congressional District on February 27. Under the present law, Rev. Smith will need signatures of 2,000 registered voters on nominating petitions in order to get his name on the ballot.

Rev. Smith was chosen by a vote of 33 to 30 over Alfred Rhodes, Jr. Rhodes agreed to "make the first step toward seeing if we can work together" after Rev. Smith asked him to serve as his campaign manager. Rhodes, who ran for the state legislature from Hinds County in November, 1967, said he is still interested in running for Congress himself, and it was suggested that he might run in November for fill a full two-year term. The Feb. 27th special election is to fill Williams' seat only for the current 5-month session of Congress.

The meeting in the Masonic Temple was called by Charles Evers. He was urged to run for office himself, but refused because he felt he could do more good organizing in Mississippi than serving in Congress.

Support was pledged to Rev. Smith by those present from Adams, Copiah, Claiborne, Hinds, Walthall, Warren, and Wilkinson counties. Also included in the Third Congressional District are Amite, Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Pike counties.

Dear Readers -

We got this letter from Mrs. J in DeKalb, Miss.:

"Don't have much to spare as must live from welfare and commodities. Wanted to give to help in what you trying to get for rights and things to help color folks in Miss. \$2. is sent in here and will send more when it can be spare to help."

We Need YOUR help, too.

Members of Hinds County FDP, Hinds County Young Democrats, AFL-CIO Woodworkers, and Elks said they would work among their members. Contributions were pledged by attorney Jack Young, Lawrence Guyot, R.L. Bolden, Edward Lee, Sr., and Charles Evers.

Rev. Smith, 65, is pastor of St. John Baptist Church. He is also a local businessman and real estate operator in Jackson. He was a candidate for Congress in 1962, running against John Bell Williams. He got 2,853 in that campaign, which he said was to try to get a bill through Congress on poll taxes and voter registration.

Rev. Smith's campaign office is Room 10, 1072 Lynch Street, Jackson.

January 2, 1968

McComb, Mississippi 39648

TO whom it may concern:

I, the Rev. W.F. Summers, chairman of the Tri-County Community Association, wish to issue this statement concerning a meeting which was held December 18, 1967 at the Court House in Magnolia.

1. I would like to deny such statements which appear in the McComb Enterprise Journal, December 19, 1967 that the T.C.C.A. request to become a Delegate Agency of Southwest Mississippi Opportunities (SMO).
2. We did not request to meet with SMO in such meeting that was held. Our request was to meet with the Executive Board of SMO to try to negotiate with them as to bring about peace and relationship between some of the Citizens and present COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM.
3. We can furnish a duplicate copy of our letter and petitions to SMO. The OEO in Atlanta, Georgia, OEO in Washington D.C., the CITIZENS CRUSADE against POVERTY, Washington, D.C. and Senator Robert Kennedy also has a duplicate copy.
4. We would further like to introduce that this type of meeting which we did not ask for is the feeling of the TCCA that this meeting was to destroy peace and relationship among the poor people. We further believe that the meeting was a conspiracy to destroy the TCCA. We further believe from such documents which we received and we are turning over to the JUSTICE DEPARTMENT that this meeting was even conspiracy to commit MURDER.
5. We further believe from the information we received that the individual was there from Washington D.C. was taking a hand in this conspiracy because certain documents which was turned over to us stated that the meeting was taped. Whenever the man (the one from Washington) speaks the tape was turned off. We are asking the JUSTICE DEPARTMENT to investigate that meeting.
6. These Headstarts has destroy the peace in these adjacent counties. It was the intents of the TCCA to try and build up peace in these counties. We do not want a Detroit Riot but if its the intents of some certain people and certain program to cause a riot we are not going to stop. We have operated our program on peaceful bases, but if it take putting 4000 or 5000 people in these street to get the job done, we will do it.
7. We would also further deny certain statements that were made in public meeting at the court house at Magnolia on December 18, 1967 by the Rev. I.C. Harper. We are sure that Rev. Harper has sufficient evidence to support his statements in Court because the TCCA consider such slander is liable for suit and the intents of the TCCA to take such action which is necessary is to correct those statements.

From the information we have received that if Rev. Harper had been spending more of his time trying to help the poor and needed and not try to help himself so much, he would be a better pastor and would not had tried to destroy his members who are working so hard trying to better their conditions.

We invite other readers in the Tri-County area to send us their ideas about this program and the problems that Rev. Summers mentions.

around the state

Mr. Robert Miles, long-time community leader in Panola County, will be a candidate for Beat 5 Supervisor in a special election on February 13th.

Black people in Beat 3 of Holmes County are working to get a candidate for Justice of the Peace in a special election to be held also on February 13th.

John L. Chase, Sr., who ran for Beat 1 Supervisor in Copiah Co. primary elections in 1967, is making another appeal to get unemployment benefits that were not allowed him while he was a candidate. The Mississippi Employment Security Commission ruled that he was not eligible to receive benefits for 5 weeks (\$150. worth) because he was a candidate for "full-time public office" and "not likely to be considered for employment" during that period.

Mr. Chase, who lost to a white man in the second, run-off primary, says that he was available for work and was entitled to the unemployment compensation.

On December 19, 1967, black candidate Richard L. Gardner lost 95-495 to a white man in a special election for city commissioner in Charleston, Tallahatchie County.

During the time when lawyers were working very hard to help newly-elected Negro officials get the performance bonds they needed, it is reported that an agent of the F.B.I. called one lawyer and asked him to let the FBI know if there would be demonstrations if the officials did not get bonded.

Mrs. Winson Hudson of Leake County reports that on December 20th, 20 Negro teenagers went into a "white" cafe in Carthage.

The next day, Serels Leflore,

an 18 year old black youth, was asked by his boss to go out on Highway 35 to work. He carried a load of posts there and was unloading them when 6 men came up behind him with stockings over their faces and asked him did he want to see a Black Christmas. They made him lie down on a post with 5 pistols pointed at his head, and they beat him with bullwhips. Leflore hollered so loud that a white man up the hill came running down and told the 6 men to let him go and started shooting at them. The men ran off. Leflore told the FBI who some of the men were, but no arrests have been made. Leflore's employer, named Henderson, is said to be a former president of the White Citizens Council of Leake County.

The Mississippi Emergency Relief Program of the NAACP has so far given \$17,000 to people to pay for food stamps, as well as \$500. to people in non-food stamp counties who were in need. Also, 4 tons of clothing have been distributed since the program began in November, according to Alex Waites, director. The program is also designed to encourage changes in state and federal programs to help poor people.

At a meeting held Sunday in the Hotel Heidelberg in Jackson, it is reported that a bi-racial group of Mississippians loyal to the national Democratic Party discussed how they would try to take control of precinct, county, and district conventions this spring. The 300 loyalists, mostly from the NAACP, labor, and white moderates, set up meetings to be held in 17 counties before the end of February. They will be led by Rev. Allen Johnson and Tom Knight, head of the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education. People from 23 counties attended.

News from the Movement Against the War

At least 16 members of the U.S. armed forces have left the service and are hoping to be allowed to stay in Sweden. One of the men is 30 year old James Grant of Meridian, Miss. who left an army base in West Germany with three buddies when they all received orders to go to Vietnam.

Liberation News Service reports that Grant, a black man, said "I didn't like the idea of going there to kill or get killed. We've got nothing to do in Vietnam."

A Negro 'refugee' from Miami, Florida, says that "the Vietnam war is not the Negro's war. I don't want to be an American citizen any more."

A London, England, committee that helps men who want to leave the U.S. armed forces admits it "helped" a phoney deserter. The man turned out to be a British police agent who was trying to find out how they got deserters out of the country.

200 demonstrators marched in

20-degree weather at the Pentagon (headquarters of the 'war machine' in Washington, D.C.) and five young men turned in their draft cards. The action was to protest the indictment of five men, known as the Boston Five, who helped in protests against the war and the military draft.

On January 12th, at least 60 demonstrators were arrested and a dozen injured by police when they tried to break up a protest at a hotel where Secretary of State Dean Rusk was speaking. Cops used chemical spray and their motorcycles as well as nightsticks as weapons in the San Francisco action.

An American Indian, due to be discharged from the Navy in two months, turned in his I.D. card in California last month. Leo Leech, who has won the bronze and silver stars, was not arrested but put in a mental institution. He joined the service when "the war hadn't escalated and it didn't seem such a bad thing to do at the time....They're wiping out that country (Vietnam) as fast as they can....It's all being destroyed because our old men don't like the way those people want to live."

IN THE LEGISLATURE with REP. CLARK

Rep. Robert G. Clark of Holmes County says he is not in favor of the compulsory school attendance bill that is now being considered by the Legislature. He says it is not in effect in rural areas, where students must attend for only 80 days per year in areas where the population is under 10,000. He says that allowance should be made for the financial

ability of parents to pay if they are fined for not sending children to school. "There are children in Holmes County now without the clothes and shoes they need to go to school," he said.

Clark reports that he received no invitation to the Inauguration Ball, which is sponsored by supporters of the governor.

"Anti-Welfare" Law - continued from page 6

The bill might not be so bad, if it didn't leave all the decisions to the states. If the law really provided beneficial training and employment for welfare recipients, it would deserve a try. But past experience practically guarantees that Southern states will use this law to make welfare more degrading and useless than ever.

In the next year or so, thousands of aid recipients, lawyers, and welfare rights workers will have to spend millions of hours fighting abuses under this law. When they are done, if they are lucky, the welfare system will be no worse than it is now. This is a tragic waste of energy that might otherwise go into building a better society.

Letters

Dear F.I.S.

I am writing to you concerning some of the news in our town of Friars Point.

I am about to start holding court. Heretofore the Justice of the Peace Court were held in the City Hall in Friars Point. I call the honorable mayor A.W. Arenz of Friars Point, ask his permission to hold my court in the city hall. He said No. I would have to find or build me an office. The mayor stated that the City Board voted not to permit any court to be held in the city hall. This is Strange; for twenty years or more the white men that were Justices of the Peace, they held their court there. Majority of the City Board are my bitter enemies!

I am praying that we will contest this dual system and also picket the city hall. And the majority of the men on the Board are operating business in Friars Point. A good boycott would line them up very much.

I am inform that one Big Shot and one insurance executive phone all the companys, for them not to write a bond for me. Thanks to Mr. Self, he guided me every step of the way and stood by my side. After Mr. Self (editor's note: from the Lawyers Committee) left town I call up a certain insurance company and that guy pull a cussin solo. But before the conversation were ended it were a Duett (smile). In his remarks, he stated that no dam body in Mississippi could make him give me a bond (smile). I have two bonds, one from Stan Coen and one from the Michell Insurance Co. If anything we can do to put the heat on that guy we should do it.

I am cheerful to do my job, Only one thing can prevent it, that is Death.

Best wishes to you all. Yours as ever for a just cause.

Dan Ferguson, Jr. J.P. (Coahoma County)

Dear F.I.S.

I do really enjoy reading the Newsletter. It keep you up with what going on around the State, and with Negro or the black man, whatever to call, in his struggle for Freedom. I have not had any news to contribute to this, since where I live in Oktibbeha County, the Negro see only through white eyes. They do not see very much for themselves and to work in majority to better the less fortunate ones.

I wish for solution that might change their thinking. If you ever run across one, please publish it.

Your truly,
Bennie Butler

P.S. I am sending you check that you might be able to continue to write.

Marion County News:

We are yet trying to work our Headstart centers without funds. We are poor people, but the Community Action Programs in Marion County don't help many poor people here. Don't fail to try to help us please.

Also we have people here don't get welfare as they should. I think people are not able to work get \$20. a month. When they pay their Doctor they don't have enough to get food stamps. Old people need more help here in Marion County. Our Negroes need more money or food stamps free. We have people 85 and 75 don't get but \$20. a month welfare. These people need help.

sign, Mrs. Lucille Dukes

Remember the Welfare/Rights
Convention - Sat. Jan. 27th, 10a.m.
Bell Flower Church, Grenada, Miss.

Editorial Opinion JANUARY 13-14, 1968

THE SOUTHERN COURIER

The 'Anti-Welfare' Law

There is not much for poor people in the new Social Security and welfare law passed by the U.S. Congress. True, the benefits for elderly people under Social Security will be raised--slightly. But with the addition of even more rules and regulations concerning welfare, poor people must now wonder if they will live long enough to see their first Social Security check.

George A. Wiley, director of the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO), says the "anti-welfare" provisions of the new law give "federal sanction to lawless and irresponsible welfare practices which starve, degrade, and harass" poor people.

Of all the new restrictions, the "freeze" on Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) has drawn the bitterest criticism. Under the "freeze," the federal government will support ADC payments to the same percentage of a state's children who were getting ADC on Jan. 1--and no more. (This rule, like most of the others, goes into effect next July 1.)

In Alabama and Mississippi, the federal government pays almost the entire cost of the ADC program. So this new limitation means that many children are going to go hungry in the future, just because they weren't born soon enough. Of course, the states can still make additional ADC payments on their own--but Alabama and Mississippi aren't likely to volunteer. What the states might do is cut down on everybody's ADC grants, so they can spread their federal money even farther than they do now.

If this "freeze" is the federal government's attempt to do something about illegitimate children, it is just about as reasonable as the "substitute father" rule used by the states. And a three-judge federal court has already said that substitute father rules are unconstitutional.

Another part of the new law requires ADC mothers to accept jobs or job-training. If they refuse without "good cause," their payments can be stopped. Welfare rights people say this is another blow at the Negro family structure. "Having forced hundreds of thousands of unemployed men to desert their families so that their children can receive public assistance," Wiley says, "Congress now proposes to force mothers to leave their children and search for work."

U. S. Senator Robert F. Kennedy of New York tried to change the law, so that mothers with small children would not have to leave them at home. But his amendments were knocked out of the final bill. (The law does say that welfare departments must provide care for the children of mothers who are required to work.)

Under the law, it is up to the states to decide what is "good cause" for refusing work. But as Walter Reuther of the United Auto Workers told President Johnson in a letter last month, "Those states where welfare standards are lowest, and administration harshest, are least likely to grant the exceptions the measure permits."

There are many other complaints about the new law. For example, it allows ADC families to earn \$30 a month without affecting their eligibility for welfare, and also lets them keep one-third of all they earn above the \$30. Welfare groups say that in most states, even this added income would not give an ADC family enough to live decently. However, the law also allows the family to keep the earnings of children who are full-time students--though this isn't likely to be very much.

The law does not require that all people in compulsory work programs be paid the federal minimum wage. So, despite provisions to the contrary, it is hard to imagine Alabama and Mississippi passing up this chance to replace regular workers with this convenient supply of slave labor. Now, when you see a road gang, you won't know if the workers are convicts--or welfare recipients on a "special work project."

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NAVY FORCED to CHANGE POLICY

Early in January, the U.S. Navy told sailors who are planning to go to the big Mardi Gras celebration in New Orleans next month that they should "go along with" the discrimination that is practiced against Negroes, Jews, and Italians.

That meant that Navy officers would send the "right" men to the "right" activities, many sponsored by private groups, but interested in the money the Navy men would bring in.

There were protests to the Navy from around the country. The Secretary of the Navy then announced that names of sailors on four Navy ships that will visit New Orleans during Mardi Gras will not be given to organizations that sponsor segregated parties.

"LOYAL" ALABAMA DEMOCRATS ORGANIZE

A new political organization was formed in Alabama in December, known as the Alabama Independent Democratic Party. Its purpose is to make sure that the national Democratic candidate for President is on the ballot in Alabama next November.

By putting up a list of "unpledged" electors in 1964, the Alabama regular Democrats kept Johnson and Humphrey's names off the ballot.

A white Birmingham lawyer, David J. Vann, is chairman of the A.I.D.P. Vice-chairman is attorney Peter Hall, member of the all-Negro Jefferson County Progressive Democratic Council.