FREEDOM INFORMATION SERVICE

# MISSISSIPPI NEWSLETTER

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## EVERS gets APPLAUSE, THREATS

Negro candidate Charles Evers is winding up his second round of campaigning for Congress, in preparation for the run-off election against Charles Griffin on March 12. He has spoken all over the Third District, including a well-received talk to students and faculty at all-white Mississippi College in Clinton (Hinds County). Since getting more votes than any other candidate in the February 27th voting, Evers has received many threats. He was offered $50,000 by one caller to get of the race. He replied, "You've got the wrong man. My price is beating Griffin."

At Mississippi College, Evers urged his audience to "stop being afraid of what you know is right.... All of you have been taken care of by us, and we've honored and respected you. Give me a chance to go to Washington and do a job like any Congressman," he asked.

A 16-year old white boy is being questioned about a shot-gun blast that was fired toward Evers house in Jackson Sunday night. A volunteer security guard fired back at the car, which had passed the house several times. The boy denies that he knew Evers lived in the house, but said he went to get his gun after being threatened by the guard. Another report says that there were apparently four adults in the car that went by Evers' house, and that the young boy might have been put up as protection for the adults who did the shooting, because the courts would be easier on a juvenile. A closed hearing was to be held this morning for the unidentified youth.

Evers' campaign workers remind voters that his name appears first on the ballot, which should be read carefully since both candidates have the same first name.

## STUDENTS EXPELLED

Letters were sent February 29 to the three Alcorn A&M students accused of various kinds of "insubordination." The letters said that James Bishop and Percell Rials were thereby expelled from school and Cephas Rials was suspended until September, 1968.

During their hearings before the college disciplinary committee, the students were not allowed to present proof that they were being punished for political reasons, because no lawyer could be present on their behalf, and they were not allowed to show the inconsistencies in the testimony of the people accusing them. An observer says that "this case beautifully illustrates how students can be hurt by these unfair procedures." Legal action is being considered by the three.

The Washington County Alcorn alumni association has asked for a full investigation of the February 21st violence, to establish what is true or false of that reported.

## C O R D E L I A ' S  C O L U M N

by Cordelia Nikkalaos

Something in a reader's letter to the Newsletter last week has been bothering me. The letter talked about how a Headstart center helps a community, and said (among other things) that going to Headstart helps a child to learn "table manners," "obedience," and "to adjust to the society in which he lives." Well, if I thought that was what Headstart centers were teaching, I would bomb them! But the fact is that some Headstart centers get into trouble because they try to do some really good things for the children. That is, they try to let learning be the exciting thing that it really is, and to allow a child's natural intelligence and curiosity to develop in freedom and joy.

To a small child everything is new. They are full of questions: "What is that?" "How does it go?" "Why?" "Why?" and again: "Why?" You know if you know children. They want to see everything, touch everything, taste everything, do everything, go everywhere - until they have been in school for a few years. Then they want to go anywhere but to school, do anything but schoolwork. Why? Why is it that by the time they get to high school age, many of those who are still in school think more of games and dances and beauty contests than of classes?

There are many reasons. But I think the biggest one is the way most schools are run. If you take eager, curious children and shut them in a room, in straight chairs all in rows and all facing one way, and make them sit still and not talk, you are already well on the way to making them hate school. Then, if you make everybody learn exactly the same thing, in exactly the same way, and give rewards ("Good Grades") for playing back the information like a jukebox and punishing squirming, talking, or asking the "wrong" questions, you have set up a good way to make people conform, but not one in which people can learn very much that will really help them to be free, creative, complete human beings.

Most of us who went to school went to the kind of schools that worked at making people "adjust." That is what The Man wants us to do - to adjust to what he wants us to be. And that is why there is so much we can learn from little children and from people who never went to school, or who went only long enough to learn to read and write and count. The fewer years a person has spent in school in this society, the more years he has had to get an education. And some of the people who have been spoiled by schools are starting to find that out.

The answer, of course, is not that nobody should learn anything except from their own experience, any more than it is that everyone should go to the public schools as they now are set up and learn to conform and to hate learning. There has to be another way (maybe several other ways) and I want to know your ideas about this.

Please write to me! That is the only way I can know if anyone reads this column or cares what it says. Other readers want to know what you think, too. We can't get together every week to talk, but we can share ideas this way. Write!

## Miss. News

—Two Nashville men are being held in the Canton jail on $5,000 bonds, charged with having marijuana. They are "black power advocate" Fred Brooks, and Ron Gardner. Two women who were riding with them, Jean Hagins and Adrian Cobb, are held on $1,000 bonds as material witnesses. Apparently the Nashville papers picked up the story with amazing speed (altho Jackson TV first carried the story of the Wednesday arrests on Thursday evening news,) and are making a big deal out of Brooks' arrest, because of his activities with black people in Nashville.

—School trustee candidates in West Tallahatchie and North Pike lost elections Saturday by many votes.

—Roosevelt Sias is circulating petitions to run for Beat 4 Supervisor in a special election April 16 in Issaquena County.

## "Crowd-In" on Food Stamps

A "crowd-in" was held at the Food Stamp office in Greenville Tuesday, sponsored by the Washington County chapter of the NAACP. The protest was decided on at a meeting Monday night, where Alex Waites, acting Mississippi field secretary of the NAACP said that state officials are using the welfare department to try to get rid of Negroes in the state. He said, "The Negro has become an unwanted commodity in the Delta. The mule could be disposed of humanely. The Negroes can't."

A petition was presented to welfare officials Tuesday, as about 100 people crowded around the office, promising to stay until they were certified as eligible to get Food Stamps.

The petition said:

"We have been forced into this action by the failure of the Local Department of Welfare, State Department of Welfare and Department of Agriculture to act on our grievances.

"We have asked for the elimination of the indecent, inhuman and callous treatment of the poor applying for certification or re-certification for food stamps. The tiny reception room accomodates only a few people. The others must embarrassingly wait in line here in the street regardless of the weather. This wait may be for hours. The interviewers process approximately 10 applicants each during the working day 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Those remaining are told to return tomorrow. The miles they may have travelled, the condition of their health is of no concern.

"We have asked for staff changes. The all-white staff serving a predominantly Negro public and performing this service unsatisfactorily adds to racial unrest and dissatisfaction with the service supposedly created by the Department of Agriculture to stretch the food dollar of the poor. The reason given to date for the racial composition of staff is not acceptable.

"We are now asking that:

1. The certifying office remain open until all requesting service be served.
2. Additional space be provided so that those requesting service be sheltered during the waiting period.
3. That additional staff be hired immediately, if necessary on a provisional basis until the merit program can be used.
4. Negroes be among those hired, especially in the category of interviewer."

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Also in Greenville, the Herbert Lee Community Center has started a fund-raising drive for a "Poor People's Supermarket." The money collected will be deposited in individual accounts with the NBL Credit Union. When the supermarket is ready to begin business, investors may transfer all or part of their accounts to the business in return for stock. Until funds are traded for stock, people will just have a regular savings account.

Leaders of the Herbert Lee Center will make fact-finding tours of supermarkets in other cities. According to Dr. Matthew Page, chairman of the economic development committee of the Center, "The poor people have a booming supermarket in Natchez."

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## In many school districts You CHOOSE your SCHOOL during MARCH

Rev. Ed King of Delta Ministry, and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund urge you, before making a decision on a school, to

- talk to parents of children who have transfered to integrated schools
- talk to black students who are now in integrated schools

# MARION COUNTY NEWS

We are member of T.C.C.A. are yet trying to see can we get our children back in school. We like to work. Also our children like going to school, but we can't go on without funds. People that work with T.C.C.A. are poor people and the children we had was poor peoples children. We work as long as we could, without funds.

The people that work in head start at Pearl River Opportunities program laught at us working without funds.

They say they sit in office and cross their legs and make $200.00 a month, but if something don't be done, that kind of talk is going to cause a riot in Marion County. Believe it or not because they won't work poor people and they are mad. When people that really don't need to work are popping off.

Signed: Mrs. L. Dukes
Columbia, Miss.

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Shaw, Miss.

Dear Friends,

I have been receiving the Newsletter for quite some time now. Please accept my apologie for not responding before now, because the Newsletter has certainly been a great source of information that you cannot get in the daily papers. Especially the progress of the negros. I have used the Newsletter in all my community meetings. Thank you very much for the article by Representative Robert G. Clark. I sincerely pray that his bills will be accepted and acted upon by the House.

I won't consume your time, telling you all about the problems we are having in our county. Because I am sure every thing is being done, locally and nationally toward helping to solve some of our problems.

One thing I would like to mention. All the Negros that run for the school Board were disqualified by some new law that was explain to them the date of the deadline. This case has been taken to court.

Yours for Freedom,
(Mrs.) Velma Bartley

Dear Mrs. Bartley:

Thank you for your letter and your contribution. We really need and appreciate any small or large contributions that people can make.

We hope you will feel free to send in news from your county, however, because we just don't have time to get first-hand information from most places, and in order to let readers hear from each other from one end of the state to the other, we must depend on letters, such as the one on this page from our most loyal reporter, Mrs. Dukes.

And frankly, we're not so sure that "everything is being done" to solve the big problems that people have. So please let all of us know what is happening in your area and what ways you've tried to do something about them. Maybe this way we can all come up with better and better ideas and indeed make some important changes in our lives.

The Editor

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ACCORDING TO THE U.S. AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT, "the nation's farm labor force in January was at the lowest level of any survey week of record. The total farm labor force for the US was estimated at 3,493,000 persons, some 222,000 below the level of a year ago....

"The number of workers on Mississippi farms was estimated at 88,000, the same as reported in January 1967. This figure included 73,000 farm operators and unpaid family workers and 15,000 hired workers. The five-year January average (1962-66) was 106,000, including 88,000 family workers and 18,000 hired workers."

## In the House with Clark

Representative Robert G. Clark says he expects to introduce into the Mississippi House of Representatives by Tuesday of next week a bill that would establish a fair system of determining the salaries of school principals. He said the salary scale would depend on the academic degree of the principal and the number of teacher units in his school.

Clark left Thursday afternoon for appearances in New York, Detroit, and Washington, D.C. over the weekend.

He said that a bill had been passed in the Senate that changes the circuit court terms in Holmes County. He had planned to introduce such a bill in the House, but now the House will consider the Senate bill and it will likely be passed.

Clark emphasized again that he is opposed to sales taxes on necessary items, saying that they "take bread out of poor people's mouth who don't have anything now." "Necessities" include medicine, food and clothes. Clark favors income taxes and sales taxes on soft drinks, alcohol, and tobacco.

Clark said the hottest issue in the House this week was a bill to make a study of the Mississippi Research and Development Center. Clark said the main problem was that some legislators don't like the Greenville project, which is designed to help improve the lives of Negroes who need training and decent housing. A vote in the House approved a study of the R&D Center.

## Natchez Candidate

George West, Negro funeral home director in Natchez, has announced he will be a candidate for Ward Two alderman in the primary election May 4th. Last year, West was appointed by the aldermen to a term on the Natchez-Adams County School Board, beginning March 1, 1968.

## Public Employees' Strikes

There have been strikes by public school teachers in many areas of the United States in recent weeks. Some school boards have gotten court injunctions against the strikes. In San Francisco, the mayor first called for negotiations. Officials in Florida refused a proposal by strikers in the Florida Education Association, saying it sounded like "a labor contract."

Certainly Mississippi teachers have as many reasons to complain as teachers anywhere in the nation. But if State Senator Edwin Pittman of Hattiesburg has his way, our teachers and other public employees will not have the right to strike, as other workers do.

Claude Ramsey of the Miss. AFL-CIO issued a statement Wednesday saying that the bill Pittman introduced into the Senate would "reduce the public employees of Mississippi to servitude. As we understand it, Senator Pittman introduced this bill because he was concerned over the number of public employees strikes currently in progress throughout the Nation. While we share the Senator's concern over these strikes, we are equally concerned over the reasons prompting them. Obviously these employees have legitimate grievances that need attention. People do not just walk off the job and cut off their livelihood without just cause....

"If the Senator is serious in his desire to prevent public employee strikes, it is suggested that he give serious consideration to legislation guaranteeing these people the right to collective bargaining....

"If our system of government in these United States is to survive it is absolutely necessary that a free labor movement be maintained. The right to strike is basic...."

IMPORTANT →

[ALL CANDIDATES FOR U.S. CONGRESS AND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS MUST QUALIFY BY APRIL 5 to run in 1968. ↙

# Black Struggle in Rhodesia

Students, faculty, and visitors had a chance to meet a liberation fighter from Rhodesia, Africa, at Tougaloo College Wednesday night.

Mr. Stanlake Samkange (pronounced Sam-con-ga) is now in exile in the United States and teaching American history at Tennessee State University in Nashville. His wife is from Jackson, Miss. and is a graduate of Tougaloo College.

Mr. Samkange explained that he left his country because he would otherwise be in jail there on account of his activities in working for self-determination by Black Africans. He said the three Rhodesians hung by white Premier Ian Smith's government on Wednesday were his co-workers.

He said that Black Africans first tried to ask the British government to guarantee justice to them, but the British could not do this. Then they tried appealing to the white Rhodesian government for their rights, without success.

Later on, they tried to work out multi-racial political parties, but got little support from Europeans. Mr. Samkange said the whites had "apartheid (racial separation) in their hearts, and partnership on their lips."

Then they decided to stop begging, and Black Africans said "we have a right to rule in our own land. We are in the majority." Other countries in Africa were getting their independence, and Rhodesian Black people formed their own African nationalist parties.

He said that blacks feel they can trust themselves to rule both black and white with justice, so that when black people win their struggle for liberation, they will not try to throw Europeans out.

Mr. Samkange said that it is an open secret that guerrilla fighters are trained in other African countries and enter Rhodesia from the new nation of Zambia, just to the north. He said the guerrillas get guns from Communist China, because that country is the only one willing to supply them and "we cannot refuse."

# Boycotts & Sovereignty

There has been a boycott on white stores in Belzoni for about a month now. Nearly two dozen arrests have been made in connection with it, though the boycott itself is apparently quite effective.

Perhaps the most important thing about the Belzoni boycott is that a state investigator has come in and pretty much taken over local law enforcement there. The same thing has happened during boycotts in Port Gibson, Fayette, Natchez, Hazlehurst, Hattiesburg.

It is reported that Leland Cole, an investigator for the State Sovereignty Commission, has gone where boycotts have been called and, among other things, engineered a number of arrests on phony charges. Evidence was introduced in a court case concerning his involvement in false arrests in Hattiesburg a few months ago.

In Belzoni, he has been given special law enforcement powers by the city council and he is telling the police chief what to do. It is rumored that the chief is none too pleased about this, thinking that Cole is causing more trouble than he is solving.

Nevertheless, a number of arrests were made in Belzoni after a meeting on February 19. The NAACP president was put under a total of $700. in bonds for having an improper license tag and resisting arrest. That case was finally settled for a $10. fine. The next morning, about 20 people were arrested, apparently at random, including several minors. They were charged with failure to obey an officer. The next week, NAACP field worker Rudy Shields was arrested for allegedly threatening by force or violence to interfere with someone's vocation.

Some arrest cases have been dismissed; jury trials have been demanded for others. The big question concerns the Sovereignty Commission's involvement in black boycotts.