

MISSISSIPPI FREE PRESS

"The Truth Shall Make You Free"

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Vicksburg Steps Up Poll Tax Campaign

Vicksburg — The Warren County Improvement League is energetically directing a county-wide poll-tax-paying campaign. The drive was launched at a special meeting, held at the Jackson Street Branch YMCA, the night of December 7, which was presided over by Acting President J. M. Houston. The meeting was heavily attended by pastors of local churches, presiding officers of fraternal societies, social and civic clubs, and leaders from various voting precincts. A program designed to urge citizens to pay their poll tax during December and January was adopted. Several committees to work on various phases of the program were appointed.

Announcements concerning the program have already been made through the local newspapers, radio, churches, handbills and posters in public places. Reports indicate that considerable progress is being made. A group of high school students is forming to influence parents to respond to the movement.

Integrated Housing Delayed Until 1962

The Presidential Order to end racial and religious discrimination in government financed housing has apparently been postponed until the 1962 Congressional session and possibly until after the high administration sources report, next November. The promised order would prohibit such discrimination in selling houses financed with government insured or guaranteed loan money located in federally built urban renewal projects, or built with direct government loans.

Observers feel that the order has been delayed primarily to avoid antagonizing Southern

Negro Is Victim Of Police Brutality

The NAACP Reply To Hill And Neblett

By MEDGAR W. EVERS

On a recent local T. V. program featuring Bob Neblett and later a newspaper article attributed to Charles M. Hills, much is made of a statement to the effect that the NAACP and CORE have not aided the flood victims of Hinds and Rankin Counties. Well, speaking officially for the NAACP, we are not an organization that receives State Tax Funds like the National Guard, Highway Patrol, Civil Defense, etc. — as though these two gentlemen did not know, however, for further clarification the NAACP's program is geared to complete (repeat) complete destruction, elimination or what ever word is appropriate, of segregation and discrimination against American Citizens and specifically against Negroes in the State of Mississippi.

We are in sympathy with the unfortunate flood victims and many members of the NAACP have made meaningful contributions to these individuals, however, our goal is "Justice and Equality" and we shall not be deterred by distorted facts. This we hope is clear to Mr. Hill, Mr. Neblett and any others who think as they do.

Democrats, whose votes the President will have to have to secure passage of his program in the next session of Congress. If issued before the election, the order could affect election outcomes in the South. Also it is said that the President has not yet decided whether the order should also ban discrimination in making home loans by federally regulated banks, Savings and Loan Associations.



MR. REFFORD JOHNSON

NAACP Appeal To Justice Department For Investigation

Mr. Refford Johnson, a 110 long resident of Jefferson-Davis County was beaten unmercifully Saturday, December 23, 1961 in the afternoon, by law enforcement officers of the County. His only "crime" apparently, was that he had an automobile accident with a white woman in the community on a country road.

Mr. Johnson, who is a farmer, and the father of a 23 year old son, was beaten into a state of unconsciousness allegedly by Centable Sexton Ross, and officer Hollis Jones of the Prentiss Police Force. As a result of this assault, Mr. Johnson's skull was fractured in three places. He was taken to the local hospital in Jackson, Mississippi because of his serious condition.

The State and National Organizations of NAACP called on the Justice Department in Washington to make an immediate investigation into this barbaric crime against humanity by brutes acting under the disguise of law enforcement officers.

Mr. Johnson is still on the critical list at the University Hospital in Jackson, Mississippi.

Tylertown Policeman Beat Negro Youth . . .

On Saturday, December 23, 1961, Isaac N. Jones, Jr., home for Christmas vacation, was passing through a back street normally used by Negroes in Tylertown, Miss. The following is an actual account of what happened that day as related to the MISSISSIPPI FREE PRESS by the victim, Isaac Jones.

Due to the heavy traffic, Jones' car was barely moving. Upon passing a police officer in the opposite direction, the youth was instructed to keep his car moving. A short distance ahead, however, the traffic became so heavy that Jones was forced to stop, lest he plough into someone's rear fender. In the midst of this traffic, the officer stopped his car and approached Jones with these words, "Nigger, get out of that car!" When Jones said, "Yes, sir," and started to open the car door, the officer hit him on the left side of his head with his fist through the open window.

By the time that Jones managed to get out of the car, the officer struck him again, this time on the forehead. Then he reached into his pocket, drew his pistol and hit him with it. The officer then announced that he was taking his victim to jail. When the youth's mother inquired as to the nature of the trouble, the officer said to her, "Shut up! I'll put you in jail too." A Negro bystander came forward and said, "Don't take his mother! I'll take care of her." But the officer interjected, "Now, she's going too." The boy's mother requested permission to take her young daughter,

who was standing on the street crying, with her. Since the officer refused, the little child was left crying on the crowded street. The two victims were taken to the County jail and placed in separate cells without booking.

Mrs. Jones' employer, after being notified of the incident by Isaac's oldest sister, posted bond which totaled \$85.00 cash.

When inquiring as to the reason for the arrests, the sheriff announced that Jones was charged with resisting arrest, while his mother was being held for disturbing the peace, and interfering with an officer while making an arrest.

Upon returning home that evening, Jones spent the night in severe pain from his injured head. The following morning, Mr. Jones drove his badly bruised son to the Marion County General Hospital. The doctor confirmed the boy's condition stating that there were serious bruises, internal bleeding and abrasions.

NAACP UNDER FIRE

In Alabama the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is fighting in court for its right to exist in that state. The case is being heard in Montgomery.

The NAACP maintains that a court-ordered temporary injunction ordered by Circuit Judge Walter B. Jones five years ago is a violation of the Constitution of the United States.

Judge Jones is hearing the case.

"Interpretation Test" Of Constitution Is Challenged In N. O.

U. S. Justice Dept.
Files Voter Test
Suit On Thursday

One of the most important far-reaching developments in today's struggle of the Negro to achieve first class citizenship came this week in New Orleans when the U. S. Justice Department filed a suit in Federal Court challenging the validity of the "interpretation of the constitution" requirement as a test for voting in Louisiana. The suit was filed Thursday.

Attorney General Robert Kennedy said the complaint entered by the Justice Department is the first challenge of the constitutionality of such a law in the United States. (This law also applies in Mississippi and has been largely relied upon by county registrars throughout the state to deter large numbers of Mississippi Negroes from qualifying to vote.)

These officials contend when the New Orleans suit was filed by the Justice Department, action under the Civil Rights Act of 1957, were Louisiana Governor Jimmie Davis, Lieutenant Governor C. C. Avedon, Speaker of the Louisiana House of Representatives J. Thomas Jewel and Huey E. Carter, Jr., director and ex-officio secretary of the state Board of Registration.

The governor, lieutenant governor and speaker of the House are members of the state board which administers voter tests. (Continued on Page Three)

FREEDOM JOE



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White Supremists Degrade Jackson

Downtown Jackson has many beautiful buildings. Her streets are clean and rubbish free. The air is always fresh and pleasant to breathe. Yet, there remains a mar to this externally polished city. This, of course, is the ugly, filthy hearted doctrine of white supremacy, such as most of our city officials represent. These segregationists are scarred with the wrinkles of hate; they are rotted inside with sin and hypocrisy.

No, Jackson is not beautiful, for although her streets are not cluttered with rubbish, they are, nonetheless, contaminated with many prejudiced people. Perhaps it would be better if the streets were full of garbage rather than segregationists, for if it were only rubbish, it could all be cleaned up in a matter of hours. Because these "people of hate" are so thoroughly indoctrinated with lies of race superiority, it will take a long time to sweep this kind of trash from the streets of Jackson.

Although it may not be likely that these segregationists will change their ill-founded attitudes in a matter of a few hours, is it necessary that they continue to contaminate the lives of everyone with whom they come in contact? Only if we remain complacent can they continue their unjust practices. We therefore urge everyone to adhere to the request of the Negro leadership in continuing the boycott on Capital Street and other Non-violent projects. It is our responsibility, as members of the Jackson Community, to see that ALL of our rubbish is disposed of.

A Look At McComb, Mississippi

McComb, a dusty town of about 12 thousand population, just 82 miles south of Jackson, has been the seat of much of the recent desegregation activity in Mississippi. Last August the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee started a campaign for voter registration in Pike County: only about 200 of the 15,000 Negroes in Pike County had previously registered to vote. Although only 19 additional individuals have been able to register to date, the efforts to obtain democracy have gained almost 100 per cent support among the Negro community.

The outbreak of racial incidents with something happening almost every week is indicative of the change that is

taking place. During August, Bob Moses was arrested for sitting in at the Woolworth Store, and on the 30th, Burglund High School students, Bob Talbert, Ike Lewis and Brenda Travis were arrested after purchasing tickets in the white waiting room of the Greyhound bus terminal. Later, after the school protest, Brenda Travis was sentenced to a year of reform school. Under the circumstances, it is questionable whether or not Mississippi is acting under due process of law.

As important as these and numerous other incidents are important in themselves, their significance lies in the fact that a large segment of the population is now pressing for democratic rights as American citizens. As noted, the activity is originating from the local populace. In September when the students returned to school, Brenda Travis and Ike Lewis were denied admission as a di-



"Let both of us give him a whallop . . . !"

Smith Releases Statement To Public . . .

In a statement to the public, Rev. R. L. T. Smith said:

"After being urged by many prominent Negro and white citizens in the fourth Congressional district, I have consented to run for a seat in the United States House of Representatives from the fourth Congressional district of Mississippi. To the fine citizens of this district I hereby make it known that I want to be elected as your Representative to the United States Congress.

I wish to begin my campaign by urging every citizen of our great State to forget all the inhibitions of the past and face up to reality. Now, more than ever, is the time for clear thinking on the part of men who now hold public office.

Mississippi needs the best

result of their participation. This school protested a large scale denial protest. Upon walking out of school, 116 students marched downtown carrying signs and praying. They were, of course, arrested, most of whom were released on \$100 bond. However, 14 of those who had participated in voter registration were charged with contributing to the delinquency of minors in addition to breach of the peace. All these students were then denied admission to school until they would agree not to participate further. These students, refusing to discard their principles, stayed out of school several weeks. Campbell College in Jackson has since accepted these students.

When five members of the Congress of Racial Equality attempted to test the recent ICC ruling at the bus terminal during the beginning of this month they were mobbed and beaten by a crowd of 500 white people. It is significant, however, that the bus depot removed the segregation signs following this brutal incident.

In order for the desegregation process to continue and to succeed, it is necessary to have the active support of a large number of people. Whereas the Freedom Riders can come through and force the removal of segregation signs upon threat of federal marshals being sent in to maintain order, the real change depends upon continuous and generalized support as is presently occurring in McComb.

brains, the warmest hearts and the clearest minds. She needs men of great vision and deep conviction during this crucial period in her history. We are experiencing a change from an economy dominated by agriculture to one where industry and agriculture are balanced. There is a great job to be done and all the people in Mississippi must join hands to see that this job is done well.

In an industrial society there must be complete freedom of movement, freedom of access to technical training, and information among all the people. Such a society requires a pool of well trained workers to provide special skills; a rule of law, rather than of men, to insure a stable community. The needs of this new society are incompatible with a system which denies forty-two percent of the population the opportunity to realize their full capacities.

The reality we need to face is simply this: Mississippi will need the talents of the fine people of both races across the board if she is to continue to progress.

It is with this thought in mind that I want the fine people of the fourth Congressional district to give me a chance to represent them in the United States Congress.

I personally feel that God has given America a brilliant and courageous leadership in our President John F. Kennedy and the very competent and dedicated men that he has assembled around him. I wholeheartedly support President Kennedy and the National Democratic platform. If elected as your Representative, I will in every way help the Kennedy Administration fulfill its pledges to the people.

I will never vote to throw roadblocks in the path of needed legislation. On the contrary, I will vote to support much-needed funds for the education of our children. I will vote to provide assistance to those older citizens who need medical care, but are unable to pay for it themselves. In short, I shall vote for and vigorously support federal aid to education, a broad program of medical care for the aged, and expansion and broadening of the minimum wage and social security laws to bring their benefits to all citizens of

Your Politics And Mine

By LITTLEMAN

The announcement last week by Rev. Theodore Trammell of Clarksdale of his candidacy for Congressman from Mississippi's third congressional district vividly points up the rising tide of freedom for the Negro in this State.

The third district is about two-to-one Negro, and under any fair system should be represented by a Negro Congressman, or at least a person who champions the cause of all citizens of his constituency.

Counties in this district are: Tunica, Coahoma, Quitman, Bolivar, Washington, Sunflower, Issaquena, Sharkey, Holmes, Leflore, and Humphreys.

There is considerable talk that the second district may be combined with the third in a few months, by the Legislature, since Mississippi loses a Congressman this year because of population shifts in the nation. This would mean that Rev. Trammell would be opposing both Frank Smith of Greenwood and Jamie Whitten of Charleston, the present Representative from the second district. Most observers feel that Trammell is far more moderate and progressive than Whitten.

It appears that Rev. Trammell will wage a full-scale campaign, including stumping the entire district and television appearances. There is a campaign office set up in Clarksdale at 220 5th Street (Phone MA 4-4161).

The opportunity that Rev. Trammell has to inspire both the Negro and the timid-but-good white seems unlimited. It depends upon the candidate and his supporters. They can bring true freedom to hundreds of thousands of people in the Delta area of Mississippi.

PARKS TO CLOSE

Birmingham, Alabama city officials are ordering the city parks to be closed other than be integrated, according to reports heard on radio and television.

Mississippi. I believe it is time we had a Representative in Congress to work for Mississippi's economic interest. If elected I shall be that Representative.

At this crucial time in our fight with the Communist Ideology our national defenses must be second to none, and we must meet this Communist threat through not only physical force but moral strength. We can do this by making democracy a living and active force even in Mississippi.

If elected I solemnly pledge to do my best in the halls of Congress to promote the peace, prosperity and security of all the people without regard to their race, creed or color. In short, to be a credit to a free people.

"With malice toward none; with charity toward all", we begin our campaign. We are privileged to have a group of dedicated citizens, who, with great courage, great faith and in many instances great personal sacrifices, are making this effort possible.

The campaign should not deal with personalities but with the issues. And the main issue is as follows: Shall we climb up from the bottom and keep in step with the rest of the Nation, or shall we cling to an outmoded system which is inconsistent with the deeper aims of our United States Constitution, and the freedom and dignity of man.

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Smith Answers Questions . . .

At a press conference, Saturday, December 16, 1961, Mr. Robert Smith, Democratic candidate to the House of Representatives for the 4th Congressional District, answered questions on his campaign for three newsmen, Mr. Cliff Cessiums of UPI, Mr. Ben McCarthy of AP, and a freelancer from Lexington, Miss. In addition, Dr. Britton, a member of the Civil Rights Mississippi Committee, corrected an erroneous report that Robert Smith was the same gentleman who had filed suit against the Sovereignty Commission. The following is an account of the questions and answers which transpired during that Conference.

Questions Asked

- Q. Have you filed with the Secretary of State?
- A. No, candidates are not required to file with the Secretary of State until sixty (60) days before the primary election.
- Q. Who is your lawyer?
- A. We have a legal council.
- Q. Who are the members of the legal council?
- A. We are just beginning our campaign and the legal council is still in the formative stages.
- Q. What ticket will you file under?
- A. The Democratic ticket.
- Q. How long have you been a qualified elector?
- A. Since I was 21 years old.
- Q. Have you been a Demo-

crat all those years?

A. No, but I have been a Democrat since the advent of President Roosevelt.

Q. How do you plan to conduct this campaign?

A. The campaign will be conducted in the usual manner.

Q. Do you plan to make speeches from town to town?

A. Yes.

Q. What type of speaking appearances do you plan; will any be public?

A. Yes, there would be no point in speaking in private.

Q. Can you give an estimate of the percentage of Negro and White votes in this district? This is the first question that would come to the readers' mind.

A. No, not the exact percentage. We are not just concerned with Negro voters. We are concerned with all citizens and feel reasonably sure that we will receive a favorable number of the votes cast.

Q. Do you have any white supporters?

A. Yes. Just today we received telephone calls from white supporters.

Q. How many known white supporters do you have?

A. We are not prepared to answer that at this time.

Q. Q. Do you think you will win?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you have against John Bell Williams' administration?

A. His administration is not the issue in this campaign.

Q. You don't plan to attack him as a personality?

A. No. Personalities are not the issues either.

Q. Is the newspaper connected with the campaign directly?

A. No. There is no connection whatsoever between the two.

Q. Are you connected with the paper? (Mr. Smith), and You? (Dr. Britton)

A. No. (yes, I am a stockholder in the paper. Dr. Britton)

Q. Did you have a meeting last night?

A. Yes.

Q. Who are the members of the committee?

A. I am not prepared to disclose that at this time.

Q. Is it a secret?

A. No.

Q. Were there any white people at the meeting?

A. We will not discuss that now. That isn't the purpose of this conference.

Q. When is the election?

A. June 5, 1962.

Q. How many children do you have? How old are you? How long have you been in business in Jackson? How long retired? Will your wife help in the campaign?

A. I have 11 children. — 58 years old. — about 25 years. — the overall campaign setup has not been completely worked out yet.

Q. Did you have any subscribers before the first edition of the paper.

A. The paper is not the purpose of this conference. We will not be able to answer any questions about the paper.

Democracy:

Do It Yourself

The Democratic Party in the North can deepen upon support from the liberal, labor, and Negro vote. In turn, the working man can expect more legislation in his interest from the Democrats, rather than from the Republican Party, which tends to support corporate and conservative interest. As industry fights to keep down wages, and as inflation makes earnings worth less, union and political support are quite essential, to the workers in the industrialized cities.

This has not, of course, been true in the South. The Southern Democratic Party has acted to maintain segregation and has opposed labor reform such as minimum wage laws. The result of this policy has been to keep people of both races in a position economically and educationally inferior to the rest of the country. Segregation has, in other words, not only kept down Negro wages, but has at the same time lowered white wages. And while this policy has brought about an influx of industry into the South, the profits benefit go to the owners who live in New York or Chicago, and not the employees in the local areas.

This dual position within the Democratic Party makes it difficult to pass effective legislation in Congress; issues supported by Northern Democrats are likely to be opposed by the South, and vice-versa. Moreover, as long as the administration derives much support from Southern conservatives, President Kennedy, for instance, will continue to ask for moderation. As a coalition of these two widely differing interests, this party has accomplished little more than a large military budget.

Thus, desegregation and labor legislation will benefit both Negro and white individuals in the South. In other words, if liberal interest can replace the conservative, one might expect federal legislation which would greatly benefit the entire country. From the standpoint of these interested in bringing about change, any unified protest will have some effect. A substantial boycott of Capital Street will force the stores to change their hiring policies. Segregated bus stations cannot exist if there is however, sufficient protest against them. Of greater importance, however, is for citizens to pay their poll tax and to vote, for although the South is far from being a democracy, the officials have for the most part represented the people who could or did vote. other words, if liberal ele-

"Interpretation Test"—

(Continued from Page One)

tration procedure.

The Justice Department in the suit is asking that a three-judge Federal Court be convened to declare the "interpretation" test unconstitutional on the grounds that it violates the 14th and 15th amendments of the U. S. Constitution. It also asks that state officials be forbidden from enforcing the test.

The United Press International from New Orleans reported:

The law is incorporated in the state Constitution. It requires a would-be voter to answer questions put to him by a local registrar on any section of the state Constitution. The document is 300 pages long.

"Interpretation of certain provisions of the Louisiana Constitution has differed widely even among those learned in the law," the Government's suit said.

The interpretation tests replaced the "Grandfather Clause" which prevented Negroes from voting until 1915, and it has

been used to achieve the same result, the suit charged.

Violations Claimed

It said the interpretation tests violated sections of the United States Constitution and the Civil Rights Act of 1957.

The test has discriminated against Negroes particularly since the 1954 school desegregation decision of the United States Supreme Court, the Justice Department said.

The suit mentioned a pamphlet entered "Voter Qualification Laws in Louisiana — the Key to Victory in the Segregation Struggle." It urges strict application of the interpretation test as a means of preserving white political supremacy.

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One Day Service

Major J. A. Taylor Returns To Vicksburg

VICKSBURG — This historic city was given a lightning-like visit, last Sunday, December 17, by one of its most beloved citizens who has been away for quite a long time. He was Major J. A. Taylor, who is better known here and throughout the South as Dr. J. A. Taylor.

Dr. Taylor is a native of Yazoo City. He moved to Vicksburg in the 1940's. He opened office upstairs in a two-story building located on the main business street of this city. The high quality of his workmanship as a dentist soon became widely known.

He was very active in business, social and religious circles, and made friends by the thousands. About six years ago Dr. Taylor was called back into military service. From here he went to the Air Force Base at Biloxi, Mississippi.

He is now stationed in Japan, where he and his family have been for two or more years. He came back to the states, on an emergency leave, to attend the funeral of his father, which was held during the past week at Yazoo City. He came to Vicksburg early Sunday afternoon and spent several hours among his old friends, many of whom he met at the homes of Capt. James Jefferson and Mr. D. W. Simmons.

ments can obtain sufficient support here, the benefits may be far greater than are immediately apparent.

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Smith Urges Labor Study

It is time for labor to wake up, get up, and get going. Government should not be entrusted in inexperienced hands.

The case of one office holder who, by the way, holds a high and influential position, presents a shameful situation. In this man's home county, more than half the population is denied the right to vote. In face, to even try to pay poll tax and register, is looked upon as something of a de facto crime.

The arguments of such men are hollow and without substance. They have associated with people of intelligence. Some have travelled widely at government expense. Notwithstanding they come up with the same old "hokey" that camouflages their own incompetence.

The continuous mouthings of these incompetent men is intended as a sedative for men who fail to think for themselves. The deeds and words of these men complement each other. That is only natural that they have a common bond of interest. Yes, it is common. In fact it's too common.

My fellow Mississippians, let us here and now demand honesty and fair play from those who represent us. We have a right to expect that. We should accept no less.

One office holder even suggests that extending full voting rights to all of our citizens will make our government unstable. To me that exposes a basic and chronic revulsion to change. It indicates philosophy which is 100 years behind the times.

We will never go forward as we should by looking back. Everyone of us should examine this whole thing very carefully.

Many people would be greatly surprised, especially those who have been misled by certain dogmas which were in fact, intended to becloud the real issue. Take the field of labor, as an example. The laboring man has his strength, and skill to offer on the labor market. He must support his family,



THE DEBUTANTE BALL was enjoyed by over two hundred persons in Jackson at the Masonic Temple during the Christmas holidays. In the above picture a group of interested spectators look on the festivities.

provide a home for himself and his family, and build security for old age.

Basically, this is common to all laboring men. It is all but criminal to try to set one segment of our laboring population against the other. On the other hand, it is naive indeed when any laboring man believes.

You can accept this as self evident: if one segment of labor is kept on starvation wages, the other segment will in turn be adversely affected.

Let me urge all laboring men to lay aside the old bugaboo. Unite your strength for the common good of all, everybody will benefit. Lend your strength wholeheartedly to a concerted effort to improve conditions among all the laboring people of our state. All people who work for a living form the backbone of our economy. White collar workers, mechanics, laborers, farmers, in short, all workers are entitled to decent wages and reasonable hours.

You need a representative in the U. S. Congress who will initiate a bill to protect your interest, vigorously support it, and vote for it.

If you will elect me, I will do just that.

Let us unite now for the betterment of working conditions for all. Here we have a wonderful chance to help Mississippi climb from the bottom.

Signed:
Robert L. T. Smith

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