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THE CITY ELECTION

March 16 and March 23, 1959 are memorable days in the political life of Montgomery, Alabama. In the Democratic Primary on March 16, city commissioner Clyde Sellers was defeated in his bid for re-election by L. B. Sullivan.

On March 23, Mayor W. A. Gayle was defeated in his bid for re-election. This was a run-off between Mayor Gayle and Earl James. Mr. James won by a comfortable margin.

The general climate in which the campaign was conducted may be indicated from the following statements made by the leaders of the White Citizens Council: "In the campaign for mayor, the Negro vote appears to have gone strongly for Mr. James. The Negroes voted for Mr. James in our judgement in obedience to instructions given them by the Negro bosses of the Montgomery Improvement Association acting in the absence of, but, as we believe, with the approval of Martin Luther King."

"All evidence is absolutely conclusive that in Monday's election the Negro votes will decide who will be mayor of Montgomery unless the white voters wake up, fight Negro bloc voting with white bloc voting, get behind one of the two candidates and thus take the balance of power out of the control of race agitators ... All evidence is preponderantly conclusive that the candidate who merits and should receive the white man's vote under these circumstances is Mayor W. A. Gayle."

These statements were made in the Montgomery Advertiser Saturday, March 21. The verdict was rendered at the polls two days later. Sellers had been defeated in the regular race and now in the run-off Gayle was beaten. The White Citizens Council failed to elect their candidate.

We will never forget that Mayor Gayle and Commissioner (of police) Sellers were in office during the dark days of the bus protest, when some ninety of our leaders (including 27 preachers) were arrested and later when our churches and homes were bombed.

The relentless efforts on the part of Negroes to get qualified as voters bore some fruit in the election. The total number of qualified voters in this group was less than two thousand five hundred (2,500). But leadership on the part of Mr. Rufus A. Lewis and the precinct workers coupled with a spirit of unity and determination paid off. Messers James and Sullivan we do not know. But we are quite familiar with Messers Gayle and Sellers.

POLICE BRUTALITY AS A PATTERN

Perhaps there are few cities in our nation that are without fault in the area of law enforcement. Police brutality is widespread and is not confined to the South or to Negroes. However, when this behavior pattern becomes a general practice, something must be done! For example, a few weeks ago Montgomery policemen beat several Negro youth. Some of the young boys were then sent home while a few of them were actually arrested. The only explanation given by the policemen was that the youngsters wanted "to go to school with our white girls." In contrast, white youth, who are arrested for serious offenses are not beaten and when the charges are not serious they are merely "talked to" and sent home to their parents.

Asbury Howard

Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, Norman Thomas and others have made an appeal to U. S. Attorney General Rogers to take up the case of Asbury Howard of Bessemer, Alabama. Mr. Howard is the president of that city's Negro voters league. Some weeks ago he had a sign painted that would encourage additional voter registration. It read: "Lord help Americans to see that you intended human beings to have the same rights." There was a cartoon of a Negro in chains and a postscript that said: "Vote today for a better tomorrow." For this Howard was arrested, beaten and sentenced to six months in jail.

This is where the battle joins. The going is rough, "But we Have Gono Too Far To Turn Back."

FEAR - A ROAD-BLOCK TO FREEDOM

A man was arrested for violating the prohibition law. He was taken to jail. While in jail, he was beaten over the head until his hearing became affected. But he is afraid to report the incident. This news was whispered about. Some white people who heard of it deplored the brutal act. Little could be done without the consent of the beaten man.

A woman came into the MIA office and reported that three young white men came into her home by forcing their way through a window and each raped her. Those who were with her did not want their names revealed. They objected to appearing in court.

There are Black Belt counties in Alabama where there is not a single Negro voter. Some College and High School graduates live in these counties. Even they do not attempt to register. This stems from fear. The deterrent factors are intimidations condoned by the power structure and non-cooperation of registrars. It is not easy for Negroes to become qualified in those counties where it seems that the primary business of the board of registrars is to keep the names of Negroes off the books.

The most trying task for on-the-scene organizations, like the MIA, is keeping mass morale at a point of non-violent resistance. Without the courage to resist, the cause of freedom is lost. The continued "Stride Toward Freedom" is the results of relentless efforts of those who have moved on in spite of threats and dangers.

GLEAMS OF HOPE

The crudest organized opposition to first-class citizenship of Negroes of Alabama is currently the White Citizens Council and Klu Klux Klan. But they are carriers of the germs of self destruction. It is a safe prediction that the people of Alabama will not long endure the non-sensical and barbaric behavior of the Klu Klux Klan and White Citizens Council. The following statement from a newspaper is a type of public condemnation that these groups are increasingly facing. "At Tuscaloosa, Alabama hospital, the superintendent, Dr. Horace L. White (white) was forced to resign by the Klan and Local White Citizens Council. The issue was the manner in which white nurses helped Negro patients. It is not only that the Klan element has caved in public resistance to the extent that this should happen but the Probate Judge of the county, David Cochran, entreated Dr. White to leave Tuscaloosa for his safety.

The fight over alledged scandals in the present administration of the government of Alabama and the struggle between political factions over the leadership of the Democratic Committee give a quiet hour to the monotonous use of "Negro, Negro".

The new awakening among the youth is a new and shining hope of the future. The youth meetings conducted by the Woman's Political Council and the Montgomery Improvement Association have been enthusiastically attended by our youth. They share wisdom and forethought in their questions and answers.

FLASH

The Ralph Abernathys have a new baby! It is a boy--- to the delight of us all.

The Kings have just returned from India. Both Dr. and Mrs. King are enjoying fine health. Dr. L. D. Reddick of Alabama State College made the trip with the Kings. He is back at his post of duty.

Reverend L. L. Anderson, pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church, Selma Alabama met with a tragic accident during the month of January. One man was killed by his car and he was knocked unconscious. According to evidence produced, the accident occurred when the car Reverend Anderson was driving and a truck met at an intersection. Reverend Anderson's car was struck on the driver's side of his car. The impact knocked him unconscious and the car went out of control, killing a man on the side-walk.

Reverend Anderson was arrested and charged with man-slaughter. The paper wrote him up as a member of the NAACP and an integration leader. He was tried and sentenced to ten (10) years. He has taken an appeal. He is in need of financial help. Contributions can be sent to Reverend L. L. Anderson, 1607 Union Street, Selma, Alabama or to the Montgomery Improvement Association, designated for Reverend Anderson.

Readers of our newsletter will be delighted to know that the long-talked-about biography of Dr. King has finally appeared in print. It is entitled Crusader Without Violence and is written by Dr. L. D. Reddick. This book is more than the story of the life up-to-now of our leader; it is a social history of our time. It gives a vivid picture of the personalities and forces that have surrounded the birth, childhood, college days and graduate education of Dr. King. It describes those who aided and opposed him during our famous bus boycott and narrates the inside story of what was said when Dr. King and Rev. Abernathy held a closed-door conference with Vice-President Nixon and when Dr. King, A. Philip Randolph, Lester Granger and Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary of the NAACP, spoke with President Eisenhower for fifty minutes.

Don't miss this thrilling story! Order through the MIA or at your favorite bookstore, \$3.95. Published by Harper & Brothers. Eight pages of pictures, including one of young Martin when he was two years old.

WHITE MINISTERS CLASH WITH WHITE CITIZENS COUNCIL

Some of the counties of North Alabama are hotbeds for the White Citizens Council and Klan. Some of the younger white ministers in these counties have dared to take a Christian's position on racial matters. They have preached sermons of a truly prophetic note. They have written letters to the newspapers in opposition to the views of the avowed segregationists.

In the Methodist church the local church officials have demanded that these preachers be moved. Thus far their requests have been denied. The preachers, as of this date, have remained unshaken by these demands. The ministers have expressed a determination to stand their ground. The church everywhere should pray for these young men. This is the first major breakthrough we have had in the white minister's ranks in these counties. If they can withstand the onslaughts of these anti-social organizations we can see the dawn of a new day.

YOUTH MARCH

Representatives of the MIA carried thirty-four (34) youth to Washington, D. C. to participate in the Youth March for Integration. This was a great experience for our youth. They were deeply inspired and encouraged.