

NEWS LETTER

Montgomery Improvement Association, Inc.
 530 South Union Street
 Montgomery 4, Alabama

Reverend Ralph D. Abernathy, President
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RECENT HAPPENINGS

The Reverend Edwin King, a young white Methodist minister and a student of Boston University along with Reverend Elroy Embry, a young Methodist minister of Montgomery, Alabama and one of the nine expelled students of the Alabama State College, were arrested on charges of trespassing in the coffee shop of the local Jefferson Davis Hotel, where the Reverend King was registered as a guest. Reverend King had invited Reverend Embry to the coffee shop to have coffee and discuss business. When the ministers refused to leave after being ordered to do so, they were arrested, jailed and sentenced to hard labor. Both ministers spent two days in jail and served on a work road-gang doing hard labor before being released on an appeal bond. The case was later heard in the Circuit Court on July 12, by Judge Eugene W. Carter. They were found guilty but sentences were not passed until the next day, July 13, so that Reverends Embry and King were required to spend the night in jail. During the night's stay in jail, Reverend King reported the next morning that he was severely beaten by two white men, who were placed in the cell with him. He also stated that the two white men forced him to eat a newspaper picture of himself, Embry and a college female student, which had appeared the previous afternoon in the local Alabama Journal daily newspaper. On July 13, Reverends King and Embry were sentenced to ninety days in jail and fined one-hundred dollars (\$100.00) in cost each. Again, they appealed the sentences, and were freed thereafter on one thousand dollar bonds each. The Reverend King was badly bruised. Before leaving Montgomery on July 13, for Boston the incident was reported to the local FBI.

REPERCUSSIONS AT ALABAMA STATE COLLEGE

Reverend Ralph D. Abernathy, President of the Montgomery Improvement Association in a statement to the Associated Press recently said,.... "I do not know what form the protest will take at Alabama State College this Fall, but I am confident that it will continue." For I know that our people, especially, the young Negro students will not give up until they win their rights."

Unrest among student and faculty continue to be observed at the Alabama State College here in Montgomery. Conditions have not been the same since the 35 students of the college asked to be served at the segregated snack bar in the Montgomery County Court House. This incident set off a chain of reactions which have continued. Scores of students have been expelled, while others have been placed on Administrative probation. Many students have experienced police harassment while other have been arrested and fined without reasonable cause.

Dr. Lawrence D. Reddick, Historian and Author, was dismissed from his position as head of the History Department by the State Board of Education upon the personal recommendation of the segregationist John Patterson, Governor of Alabama. In view of pending dismissal and general instability at the college resignations continue. Among those resigning recently were: Mrs. Jo Ann Robinson and Mrs. Mary F. Burks. These teachers are loyal supporters of the movement for full citizenship. They are dedicated to the principle of human rights. Although, they have not made any public statement of their reasons for resigning, the public seems to be convinced that they are seeking academic freedom.

With school opening it will soon be known just what reaction the students of Alabama State College will take toward the official assurance that they will "behave themselves". Each student is required to sign before registration can be completed, a statement to the effect that he agrees to abide by the "policies and regulations of the State Board of Education and Alabama State College, as such regulations relate to admission, re-admission, suspension, withdrawal or dismissal, when such is deemed in the best interest of the college even though constitutional rights may be violated. Perhaps there will be some with dual personalities who will push themselves around so as to conform to such behavior patterns. Public sentiment is with the students and teachers who are determined to exercise the same academic freedoms enjoyed by other college students and faculty throughout the nation. Whatever non-violent efforts they make to secure these rights undoubtedly, will be sanctioned by freedom lovers everywhere.

On Monday evening, August 22, 1960, the Montgomery Improvement Association honored four professors of the Alabama State College, Montgomery, Alabama who were either dismissed or forced to resign, after a total of some fifty-eight years of satisfactory teaching. Bronze Plaques engraved with appropriate descriptions of the services rendered to the citizens of the Montgomery area over the years, were presented to each honoree. The recipients were Mrs. Mary F. Burks, an Associate Professor of English at Alabama State College, and a native of Montgomery; Dr. Lawrence D. Reddick, head of the History Department and Author of "Crusader Without Violence", a biography of Martin Luther King, Jr., whose dismissal was demanded by the segregationist Governor of Alabama, because of Dr. Reddick's open "integrationist activities"; Mrs. Jo Ann Robinson, Assistant Professor of English, and one time editor of the Newsletter, published by the Montgomery Improvement Association; and Robert Williams, instructor in Music and Voice and Director of the Freshman College Choir who had assisted in the defense of Dr. Martin L. King, Jr., when he was subject to repeated attacks by segregationist groups.

THE ROSA PARKS CASE

The Jet Magazine account of the plight of Mrs. Rosa Parks was shocking indeed. The friends of this heroine of the Montgomery Bus Protest were grieved to know that she was in such dire need. Although these friends and the officials of the MIA have never forgotten, they know now what they have done was not enough; therefore, they are determined to do more. All freedom fighters should know that temporary relief will not meet the great need of Mrs. Parks. There must be some long-ranged planning.

During the early period of the bus protest, Mrs. Parks was employed by the organization to work as she saw fit. Reverend Martin L. King, Jr., President of the MIA at that time sought to work out something permanent for her. At that time Mrs. Parks was doing quite a bit of traveling over the country speaking. Her schedule kept her out of the city often. This was true most of 1956 and a part of 1957. In August 1957, Mrs. Park's and her family decided to move to Detroit. She was considered the number one casualty of the struggle at that time. It was late when direct information concerning the family's decision came to the MIA. Immediately, a Rosa Parks Night was planned. The community gave her four-hundred dollars and the executive board of the MIA voted to add an equal amount making a total purse of eight-hundred dollars. Some time previously she had been given the sum of three-hundred dollars to help her with pressing obligations having lost her job at a local department store because of the stand she took that day on the bus.

The next direct information received was that Mrs. Parks had been given work at Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia. The entire community rejoiced. In February, 1959, it was reported indirectly that Mrs. Parks was not doing well at all and she was now back in Detroit. A special committee was appointed in the mass meeting and the sum of one hundred thirty-four dollars and thirty-one cents (\$134.31) was raised and sent to her. In March 1960, again, we were told indirectly that Mrs. Parks was ill, one-hundred dollars was sent to her and President Abernathy talked with her long distant in an effort to

ROSA PARKS CONTINUED:

re-assure her that the organization would continue to do what it could to assist her. On August 22, 1960, an appeal for funds for Mrs. Parks netted the sum of three hundred twenty-two dollars and twenty-four cents (\$322.24). This has been forwarded to her. As it is generally known, there was no person more loyal to the NAACP than Mrs. Parks while it operated in the State of Alabama. She is truly a soldier of the freedom struggle.

THE LEADERSHIP IN MONTGOMERY

The deep south, for generations, has been retarded in the progress of social change because of a lack of leadership on the community level. Montgomery has been no exception. Most of the available leadership has been bound by a pledge of allegiance to the status quo. A succession of leadership has not always been timely and wisely groomed. Rev. Martin L. King's leadership in Montgomery was providential. When he left the city, there was a period of groping. The test of the present leadership came in the student sit-in demonstrations. This was one of the most crucial hours Negroes in Montgomery had experienced. But with Divine Guidance and the courageous leadership of Reverend Ralph D. Abernathy, President of the MIA and successor to the Reverend M. L. King, Jr., freedom fighters are marching through this crisis.

Bernard Lee, one of the nine students expelled from the Alabama State College, is now one of the National Student Leaders. There are other young potential leaders whose dedication is unquestioned.

The churches are still the major source of manpower. Some of the present outstanding church and civic leaders are: Rev. W. J. Powell, Old Ship AME Zion Church, Reverend A. W. Wilson, Holt Street Baptist Church, Rev. H. H. Hubbard, Bethel Baptist Church, Reverend S. W. Schultz, Mount Zion AME Zion Church, Reverend Matthew Petway, Ebenezer AME Zion Church, Reverend B. D. Lambert, Maggie Street Baptist Church, Reverend A. H. Hogans, St. Stephens Baptist Church, Reverend A. L. Wilson, Oak Street AME Zion Church, Reverend W. R. Johnson, First CME Church, Reverend Robert E. DuBose, Jr., Church of the Good Shepherd (Episcopal) Reverend W. H. Harris, St. John AME Church, Reverend W. J. Fields, Lilly Baptist Church, Reverend W. F. Alford, Beulah Baptist Church, Reverend H. H. Johnson, Hutchinson Street Baptist Church, Reverend E. I. Marlowe, Reverend A. W. Watkins, Reverend J. L. Jackson, Reverend A. H. Hoffman, Reverend V.C. Provitt and other too numerous to mention here.

There are many civic leaders among the laymen who have been in the struggle since its inception; all of whom are great freedom fighters. Some outstanding women representatives of the freedom struggle are: Mrs. A. W. West, Sr., Mrs. Johnnie Carr, Mrs. Idessa Williams and many others. In our recent student freedom fund rally we had fifty-one captains, male and female, consisting of people in our local community. These persons have pledged themselves to continue to work as a team. Through this team we hope to carry the Freedom Struggle on.

FEDERAL COURT UPHOLDS DISMISSAL OF ALABAMA STATE STUDENTS

The Honorable Frank H. Johnson, Judge, U. S. District Court, for the Middle District of Alabama dismissed, two weeks ago, a petition filed by the nine (9) college students, who were expelled by the Alabama Board of Education because of sit-in demonstrations on the ground that the Board of Education of the State of Alabama acted within its vested authority and held that no constitutional rights had been violated by virtue of their dismissal. The students have appealed this decision.

MIA OFFICIALS AND BOARD MEMBERS

During the past month Reverend S. S. Seay, Executive Secretary and the Reverend Matthew Petway, Pastor of the Ebenezer AME Zion Church carried several groups of young students to the Highlander Folk School, Monteagle Tennessee to participate in the various workshops sponsored by the school.

Many of our local Baptist ministers have just returned from the National Baptist Convention, which was held in Philadelphia, Pa. Our President and his wife being one of this group has just returned to the city.