

NEWSLETTER

NEW YORK OFFICE OF S.N.C.C.
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SPECIAL REPORT ON ELECTIONS
(Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi)
from SNCC Program Secretary Cleve Sellers in New York

ALABAMA

Lowndes County

All seven candidates of the Lowndes County Freedom Organization were defeated, as follows:

<u>Office</u>	<u>LCFO Candidate</u>	<u>Democratic Candidate</u>
Sheriff	Sidney Logan, 1,426	Frank Ryals, 1,943
Coroner	Emory Ross, 1,391	Jack Golson, 1,901
Tax Assessor	Alice Moore, 1,557	Charlie Silivan, 2,234
Tax Collector	Frank Miles, 1,556	Iva Sullivan, 2,227
Board of Education	Robert Logan, 1,620	David Lyons, 1,894
	John Hinson, 1,620	Tommie Coleman, 1,933
	Willie Strickland, 1,552	C.B. Haigler, 2,139

There are, according to a November report from the Southern Regional Council, 2,823 whites and 2,758 Negroes registered in Lowndes County. The white registration figure raises questions, inasmuch as the white population is supposed to be approximately 1900; it appears that there are a substantial number of graveyard voters and it is also known that whites have come into Lowndes from other counties to register so as to offset black registration.

On the morning of the election, Negro voters heavily outnumbered whites at the polls; by the afternoon, these proportions were reversed; whites, seeing the heavy Negro turnout, went and rounded up every available voter. The final vote was also affected by the fact that the influential Baptist Alliance told Negroes throughout Alabama to vote the straight Democratic ticket.

These are some of the reasons for the L.C.F.O. defeat; more important are the positive aspects of the election. The whole experience of this past year broadened attitudes among Negroes in Lowndes. They saw that they could move to a position where they could offset the effects of terror; they saw that "black power" was not a vague evil as had been projected, but a concrete force for good; they saw the beneficial effects of unity; they saw that they could go through all the procedures for political participation and play a political role on their own terms.

There was only one known incident of violence: on the night of election day, Andrew Jones, a Negro watchman at a sawmill in Fort Deposit who had been driving black people to the polls, was severely beaten by a white gang. In general, Lowndes whites "played it cool" and abstained from excessive violence in order to avoid investigation by outsiders. Nevertheless, there were reports of minor harassment and voting irregularities and the L.C.F.O. will probably file a suit challenging the validity of the elections.

Greene County

Last September, the Greene County Freedom Organization was informed that its signed petitions for the freedom candidates (for Sheriff and Tax Assessor) were invalid. The case was appealed to Federal Court in Birmingham, which reversed this decision. As a result of the Court's order, Greene County decided to postpone the elections for those two offices. These elections are still to be scheduled; they will probably take place in December.

A Negro running on the Democratic ticket was elected to the county School Board.

Dallas County

All eight candidates of the Dallas County Independent Free Voters League were defeated, by large majorities. The black community was seriously divided in these

elections. The above defeats can be largely attributed to the position of the Dallas County Voters League, a group of relatively conservative Negroes who urged support for the straight Democratic ticket (thus becoming the only black organization in Alabama to endorse Lurleen Wallace) on the grounds that the Democratic Party was more responsive to Negro demands. Their main goal was to elect Wilson Baker (Dem.) as Sheriff over Jim Clark (write-in candidate); Baker was elected 8,089 to 7,699.

There was much intimidation and harassment of black voters. Poll watchers from the Independent League were constantly threatened and chased away from the polls. SNCC workers assisting the League were frequently intimidated and several arrests were made shortly before the elections. (Stokely Carmichael; William Stuart House -- twice; Jimmy Lyttle; A. Obaka.) Although the League requested federal poll watchers, only two were sent for the entire county. Information on irregularities and intimidation is being compiled with a view to court action.

Macon County

Lucius Amerson was elected Sheriff and another Negro (last name Locklarre) was elected Tax Collector, on the Democratic ticket.

GEORGIA

In Atlanta, Julian Bond was re-elected to the Georgia House of Representatives by 2,136 to 948. SNCC workers saturated Julian's district with posters and leaflets urging people to vote for him; this work helped to intensify Julian's "visibility" and to offset the climate of confusion which existed in the black community about the elections in general.

Around the state, the black community was often confused and frustrated by the fact that different Negro leaders advised different choices in the vote between Maddox (Dem.), Callaway (Rep.) and Arnall (write-in). Arnall did not wage an effective campaign; he made little contact with people and his public statements were generally confined to anti-Maddox declarations. Maddox, on the other hand, went out like an old-style politician and shook all those hands in the backwoods; talked about "bringing people back into government" and emphasized a program of housing, road-building, etc. Negroes all voted differently and often did not vote because of the confusion.

MISSISSIPPI

In the Congressional elections, there were MFDP candidates in the first and third districts. Both were defeated heavily, although they carried a number of individual counties.

For the Senate, MFDP candidate Rev. Whitley got 27,863 votes against Eastland's 228,726. In the primary, Whitley had won 80,000 votes. This drop was largely the result of an active campaign by conservative Negroes (in the 3 counties dominated by Charles Evers of the NAACP, for example, Whitley won only 69, 64 and 120 votes each) and by Eastland paying people to vote for him. Elsewhere, the MFDP has become stronger in such areas as Canton and Holmes County.

In elections for local office, there were 3 victories:

DeSoto County -- an independent black candidate, Rev. Bowdre, was elected to the Board of Education.

Jefferson County -- independent black candidate elected to School Board.

Leflore County -- independent black candidate, Rev. J.D. Collins, elected Supervisor of Beat 3; however, his margin was so slim that there will be a run-off on Nov. 22.

Attempts to run local office candidates in other counties were often frustrated by irregular methods. There are reports from 18 counties of intimidation, harassment and irregularities. The most common complaint is that Negro poll-watchers were not allowed in, intimidated, or otherwise driven away.

One of the most important issues in Mississippi today is the CDGM (Child Development Group of Mississippi) Program, part of Operation Headstart. In 21

counties, the CDGM is very well organized and has inspired intense community involvement. (At a recent meeting in Mississippi on the CDGM program, 5000 people attended, making it one of the largest predominantly black gatherings ever seen in the state.) Fannie Lou Hamer was the keynote speaker and received a 10-minute standing ovation. CDGM has also hired a large number of "movement people," including local men and women as well as former workers from SNCC and SCLC. This kind of grass-roots participation and orientation was, of course, a major reason for Senator Stennis' attack on CDGM and the withdrawal of funds. A few months ago, MAP -- a group of "liberal" whites inside and outside the state plus generally conservative Mississippi Negroes -- was established to move into the vacuum which was anticipated by the demise of CDGM. It aimed to become the recipient of former CDGM funds and take over the 21-county structure mentioned above. These were largely the same elements constituting the now-defunct Mississippi Democratic Conference, which had been set up to offset the MFDP. MAP's goal is primarily political: to strengthen the Johnsonian Democratic Party in the state.

SNCC'S CAMPUS PROGRAM

Program Secretary Cleve Sellers, who has been visiting a number of campuses with some of SNCC's Campus Travelers, reported intense response and changing (for the better) attitudes. SNCC is currently in touch with 20-25 colleges, as far West as Texas Southern (where James Forman recently addressed an audience of 2000) and as far North as Dartmouth, where Stokely Carmichael recently spoke and where there is an active group of black students. To stimulate initial interest, Stokely often goes to address students; follow-up is then made by another SNCC staffer who works to set up student conferences and create a nucleus of activists who will stand on their own: "Black power isn't SNCC and it isn't Stokely -- it's you."

Symbolic of changing attitudes was the election at Howard University -- considered the top Negro academic institution -- of a Homecoming Queen who wears her hair in the natural (or Afro) style. As a result of this, and contrary to past practice, some 200-300 girls are reported as now wearing their hair in this way.

"THE BROTHERS" OF ALBANY, N.Y.: A Special Report from The Brothers

In Albany, the state capitol, black people constitute 5% of the population (about 20,000 people) and live in typical ghetto conditions. About two months ago, a group of angry young men formed "The Brothers" as an all-male, all-black organization ("Why don't we have any whites? We don't have any women either, but that doesn't mean we don't like them.") working on issues of jobs, housing, education, etc. They originally organized around a labor issue -- discriminatory hiring practices by a union local -- and, as they grew, set up committees dealing with various issues. They have established liaison with (white) students from the State University and Russell Sage Junior College, who run tutorial programs and also participate in demonstrations.

Their main thrust at present is to get Manpower Training and Development and the Northeast Contractors Association to set up an on-the-job training program with contractors in the area, for construction jobs. Last summer, the Brothers exerted pressure for this by filing charges with the NLRB against the union and contractors; in July, a verbal promise was made that a contract for the program would be ready within a week. After that: nothing. On November 6, the Brothers held a rally at the State Capitol building to demand that the state and federal governments set up training programs because the present apprentice programs have excluded Negroes. They have recently picketed the Contractors Association and the OEO, and plan to continue intensive pressure.

THE HARLEM SIX

A petition written by James Baldwin, to be submitted as the Layman's Appendix to an Amicus Curiae brief in the appeal of the conviction of the Harlem Six, is now being circulated. Winning this appeal is all the more important now, in view of the defeat of the Civilian Review Board. A COPY OF THE PETITION IS ENCLOSED. PLEASE GATHER SIGNATURES (NAME AND ADDRESS); THE BACK CAN BE USED. SEND COMPLETED PETITIONS TO THE CHARTER GROUP. IF YOU WANT MORE, CALL SNCC -- YU 91313.

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