

THE NITTY GRITTY

VOL. NO. 1

MAY 6, 1967

NO. 4

SPECIAL ELECTIONS IN SUNFLOWER TO BE CHALLENGED

BY C. TINSLEY

Sunflower, Miss.--May 2, 1967 saw the special municipal elections held in Sunflower and Moorhead, both in Sunflower county, Mississippi. The special election came as a result of a previous election which was challenged by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) because of unfair voter registration practices within the county.

The May 2 elections should have been of special interest to us because an all-black slate of candidates opposed an all-white slate in a town where there are actually more black registered voters than white.

The togetherness and organization of the movement in Sunflower County was exhibited by a turnout of all but seven (7) of the black registered voters. This means that about twenty-four more blacks turned out to vote than the total white voting population of Sunflower.

-----But we lost the election. Why? The answer lies within the realms of the white election officials. We were told by officials during the election that several of our people were voting for white candidates, but we have no way of knowing this because the MFDP's black official was barred from aiding and observing the black vote. Thus, all black illiterate voters were dependent upon "all-white" election officials to mark their ballots.

"WE'RE NOT GOING TO STAND FOR
IT ANY LONGER". say Mrs. Hamor.

(cont. on p. 3)

MRS. HAMER AT - TACKS "WHITE POWER"

BY L. BREWER

Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, one of the black leaders in Sunflower, Mississippi was guest speaker on campus last Wednesday, April 26.

The audience heard the dynamic speaker denounce the power structure as it exists today and call for a mobilization of black people in Mississippi. "The white folks don't care nothing about us," said Mrs. Hamer, and it's time our people realize this." She went on to say that it is time for black people to come together and stop believing what the white man is saying.

Also, Mrs. Hamer commented in general on the qualifications of black people who are seeking offices in Municipal, county and state elections this year. She attacked the critics who said Negroes weren't qualified to hold offices by saying "We can't mess up things more than they already have been messed up by the people (white) who are in office now."

"Until recently black college students have tried to forget their backgrounds and it has been this educated Negro who has kept us black people down," said Mrs. Hamer

THE BEAUTY OF BLACK CULTURE

BY H. SPENCER

Most courses that deal with cultural appreciation in this and other colleges are irrelevant and repulsive to Black students. They are irrelevant, not because the culture of the Black community is usually completely lacking. They are repulsive because when one's own culture is not affirmed, and when he is only taught to appreciate the creations of a dominant people he loses any

sense of identity with himself. Thus he rejects his culture and struggles to obtain enough appreciation of the dominant groups' culture to win its approval.

Black students must develop a sense of appreciation for that culture which comes from our communities. We must realize that we have been brainwashed into thinking that we are culturally deprived. (con. p. 2)

EDITORIAL

The editor of the Jackson Daily news, praised President Peoples of Jackson State College, for not allowing Stokely Carmichael to speak officially on campus. He said, "with the great work of the Jackson Police Department nothing like the incident that happened in Nashville could happen here". He said that all Negroes should be proud of Peoples for his wise act.

The best thing that could have happened on Jackson States' campus while Carmichael was visiting Mississippi would have been a riot. This may seem a little drastic, but sometimes it takes drastic measures to awaken our people and show them reality. Now at Jackson State they are forming a Jackson branch of PAC (Political Action Committee) with the help of Tougaloo's PAC chairman Howard Spencer. This is a beginning for the Staters. Also a branch of PAC is being formed at Alcorn college. This is progress, brother!

We see the white power structure praising President Peoples, they also praised Booker T. Washington - who thought the Negro should bow to the white man's needs. When we see a man like the white racist who edited the Jackson Daily news praise a Negro, something is definitely wrong.

There is a rumor that next year there will be a Negro History course taught at Tougaloo. I wonder who will teach it? If this is merely a rumor then I think we as Negro students at Tougaloo should make it a reality.

The school year is almost ended and PAC hasn't accomplished half of the things here on campus that it wanted to - but being a new organization with people who are aware of our problems as black people or people who are trying desperately to find out what they are, I feel it has done an excellent job.

This summer about 16 PAC members along with PAC members from Jackson State and members of the action group at Rust College will be working in Mississippi. The need is for Black students every where to stand up and be counted, to play their part in the liberation of our people. How do you stand brother?

Black Power

FMJ

THE BEAUTY OF BLACK CULTURE (cont)

We have to understand that we are a very artistic people and that white America has not legitimized our art but has forced upon us and themselves a very one-sided view of what culture is. The art of our people is a very precious part of our heritage. For it is in our works of art that we reveal to ourselves and to others the inner vision and strength which make life meaningful for us as a people, a people who have had a unique history in this country.

I must say before going any further that in order to understand what is being said here you have to broaden your definition of culture. You must understand that every group of people in the world have culture and that white America has refused to recognize our culture because we have always been seen as inferior, incapable of beautiful creations. We have gotten hung up in that bag too; we have seen white western culture as superior to ours, which in effect is saying that we are not as good as they are.

Now I am sure there are some who would say that there is Black people's culture in the U.S. but that there is only "American" culture, however such persons would probably admit that in Chinese American, Mexican American, and Jewish communities there is culture which has developed out of the groups' life. There is what could perhaps be called an American culture but there is also the culture of ethnic groups in this country.

On April 13th, the Political Action Committee sponsored the Southern Folk Festival. To us the most important features were the numbers which came from the "Soul" of Black people. I am sure that everyone who heard Bernice Reagon, Mable Hillory, and Rev. Pearly Brown were touched way down deep, and were able to perceive not just intellectually, but emotionally what was being said in the music. The whole program was good but I am primarily concerned about the blues and

P.S

JOIN PAC

- fight for freedom
- end injustice
- be dedicated-committed
- don't forsake your people and yourself

sign up at the PAC office
or come to regular PAC
meetings, Monday nights, 6 p.m.

PAC OFFICERS

Howard Spencer---Chairman
Albert Garner---Co-Chairman
Cleve Tinsley---Treasurer

BLACK POETRY CORNER

I'm Black

Lorraine Hamlin

Not the color of shoe polish
Not a dusty gray
Not the color of smut
Not the image of night

Not stupid and stubborn
Not as dumb as people say
Not rioty and uncivilized
Not poor and dependent

Not huge and brave
Not a beggar at heart
Not strong and recognized
Not eager and observing but.

Not humbled to the white man
Not a child's white Jesus
Not the white power system
Not the ruling.

I identify with me
They call me uncivilized
My rights are stepped on
So proud "am I to be 'Black'".

Poem

Roy Wilkins is an eternal faggot.
His spirit is a faggot
his projection
and image, this is
to say, that if i ever see roylwilkins
imonna
stick half my sandal
up his
ass

LeRoi Jones

1966

BLACK

POWER

ONCE CUT DOWN -BUT-CEASE NO MORE

by

Gwendolyn Matthews

For there is hope of a tree,
if it be cut down, that
it will sprout again and
that the tender branch thereof
will not cease. Job 14 chapter

This quote from the book of Job brings many thoughts to my mind. It seems to describe the yesterdays, to-days and what will be in the tomorrows, of our black people all over this world.

First, I can see the yesterdays where our black people were being cut down like wild beast, low-rated and discriminated against. Those years where there was no peace, no hope, only a prayer and a song. Secondly, I can see today. The time when we all are becoming aware of what is going on; the time when we all have learned to fight for what we want instead of sitting and hoping and praying for a dream that only true dreamers can ever hope for.

The time of truth and the realizing of beauty in our awareness of being black. For generations and generations we have wanted to identify ourselves with the white man, only because our black people had been "cut down" and this was the only means of escape. But, through our faith, our steadfastness, and our courage we have broken through the barrier; we are "sprouting" again.

Then, there is tomorrow, hopefully a time when we as Black people will be joined together as one branch, displaying our color and exercising our "Black Power".

Through these courses of time and changes, we as black people should be ready to accept our paths, work with the present and prepare ourselves for the future. This can only be done by full co-operation from each as everyone of our black brothers. For a tree can not bear fruit if there are no branches. The time is now. Now that we are moving up, we should fight to go higher. We can!!! We know how! We will! For we once were cut down, but now that we are up, we will cease no more!

SPECIAL ELECTIONS IN SUNFLOWER (cont.)

"This," says Mrs. Hamor, "is what they've been doing to us all our lives, and we're not going to stand for it any longer." Mrs. Hamer called for a mass protest in the streets of Sunflower and boycott of the public school system in September. The response at the after-election community meeting was tremendous.

In addition to another election challenge, the next move for the Sunflower County MFDP is the county elections

CLAUDE BROWN — A MANCHILD?

BY L. BREWER

Last Wednesday night a group of students and faculty gathered in the Coffee shop to hear Claude Brown, author of Manchild in the Promised Land discuss the problems as he saw them that exist in Harlem.

Brown, who was once a Harlemito in the real sense of the word, meaning the hustler, dope pusher, delinquent, and jail bird, gave his audience HIS FORMULA of the Harlemito.

"Man," he said, "those cats like Harlem. People don't want to leave that place. They are HAPPY, man."

If one was just thinking while Brown was talking and not looking at him, he probably would have associated him with the white power structure of Mississippi saying "Niggers are happy in Mississippi. They don't want to go to school with us white folks. They like the way WE run things down here."

Brown, who looks at himself as the typical Harlem boy who made good, projected the image that the people in Harlem were there because they wanted to be and not because of the social, psychological, and economic pressures placed on them because of the power structure that exists in New York as it does in Mississippi.

"The people in Harlem," said Brown, "are not INTERESTED in POLITICS. They are STUPID when it comes to politics."

Again, one can parallel his statement to one which came from our own white power structure here in Mississippi. "Negroes are too STUPID to vote and they wouldn't even vote if they could."

By listening to Brown for two days one could easily reach the conclusion that he was not a manchild but a fake who was trying to give the black students here a "snow" job and his thoughts that were projected were just as white as that snow.

HAMER ATTACKS ... (cont.)

as she criticized the bourgeoisie Negro. "We have to get rid of these 'Uncle Tom teachers before we can really begin to make progress," she concluded.

Mrs. Hamer ended her speech by singing an old Negro Spiritual that has been converted into a Freedom song. "THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE."

PAC CONTINUES TO WORK IN MADISON

BY M. HENRY

The Political Action Committee does more than give weekly meetings and sponsor black speakers. Our aim now is to help develop Madison County into a political seat for blacks.

In Madison County, there are three per cent more black people registered than whites. That means that if all the Negroes who are registered to vote got together and vote for the same people, those people can elect who they want for their city and county officials.

PAC is not going to lead the people, but we are going to help organize them and let them choose someone whom they know and trust out of the community. It will be up to those same people to choose candidates they want for various offices.

PAC has divided its members into groups of eight to ten with chairmen for each group. Cars go out into the county every week distributing pamphlets of coming meetings, and talking with the people. We cover beat Three, which has 4,416 blacks to 1,914 whites.

Laws have been passed by the United States Congress that say black people have the same voting rights and other rights as white people. A lot of times these laws are not enforced. Those of us who are willing and able must instill in the minds of these predominantly black counties, that they have the power to control the political activities of their counties.

There will be an election in Nov. 1967 to choose county, and state officials. We urge all who are interested in the welfare of the black community to volunteer your service to help get some BLACK POWER in that election.

THE TOUGALOO NITTY GRITTY is the official newsletter of the Political Action Committee (P.A.C.). At its first publication, The Nitty Gritty was published by volunteer help with irregular publication. Now the Nitty Gritty, with Frances Jones serving as editor, will be published once a week. If you would like to be on the staff or submit an article, contact Frances Jones, Galloway Hall - Annex A, Room 80. Articles must be submitted no later than Thursday of the week for desired publication.

CULTURE: CULCHA

BY P. EVANS

Culture is a patterned way of doing things. A society and all people on earth have culture. Culture includes arts, crafts, and behavior systems. Anything that man has made is culture. Some people have a special quality called Kulture. The most "Kultured" American being, Emily Post, says, "you can have more of it or less of it." If you have more of it, you know about Arnold Toynbee, Christopher Fry, Li Po, James Joyce and other important people in the arts and humanities. You have "good taste" and "good manners." Kulture is a luxury item sold and practiced by polite society. An example would be rigid formal table manners. Any person that demands the average person to these rules must remember one thing—that rich people have hours to spend slowly picking the right knife and fork. The average person eats and enjoys his meal but time is important to him.

Culcha is what Black people have—it belongs to the black people as an intricate part of their lives. It has shaped and expressed their lives. Our culcha has been epitomized in spirituals, blues, jazz and our domination of popular music. We have produced writers like Baldwin, Wright, Bennett, and Jones; leaders like King, Malcolm X, and Carmichael; we have athletes like Clay, Mays, and Ralph Boston. Entertainers such as Diane Carroll, Bernice Reagan, Ahmad Jahmal, and Billye Holiday.

The list is endless of our achievements. Do we recognize them? Do we know of them? You ought to know. Ignorance is no excuse to perpetuate ignorance of one's self. Today should be a beginning to self awareness.

Do you want to know the history of the Black man in Music? Read LeRoi Jones' Blues People. There is a copy in the library, call no. Jon - 781.57.

SPECIAL ELECTIONS— SUNFLOWER (cont.)
in November. Until then, the people of Sunflower will continue to work hard. There will be more Black registered voters, more Black candidates, and more BLACK POWER for Black people.

THE BEAUTY OF BLACK CULTURE (cont.)

spiritual numbers because for Black people they carry the message and "soul" of our past and present struggles for survival in this country.

Immediately after the concert a number of students stayed in the chapel and sang songs which have meant so much to our people such as, "We've come this far by faith," and "This little light of mine." Maudie Hanshaw was on piano and Timothy (Shot) Spann, on the organ; both made those instruments "talk." Then Maudie and Shot began to improvise jazz and the sounds that came out were absolutely fantastic.

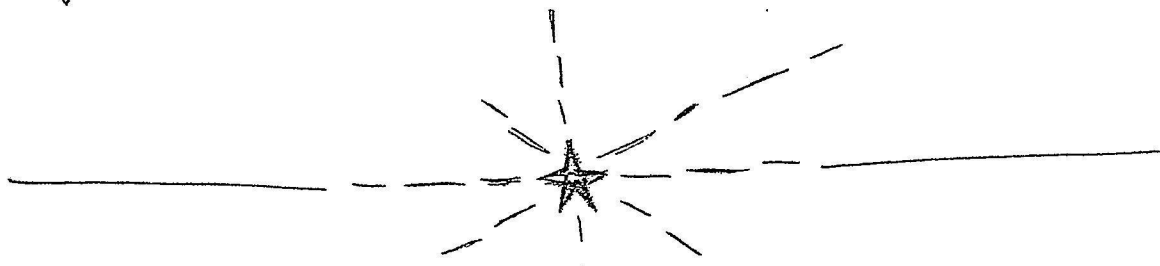
This "Soul Session" made me realize that we are so mislead about the values of our culture that we hardly even take time to appreciate it.

It is very important that we understand how we have come to be ashamed of the music that make us feel good and speaks to us. Our teachers from grammar school thru college have voiced the feelings of white America by telling us that our music was meaningless and bad. As black students we have to affirm our beauty and artistic creativity and style. We need to take a new look at the blues, gospels, spirituals, folk tales and other art which has come down to us from our forefathers.

The truth is that when we hear such music as this we are touched by it because we are apart of it but educational institutions in this society teach us that in order to be cultured you have to understand and appreciate such artists as Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart, while at the same time devaluing or completely ignoring the beauty of African and Afro-American culture. We must understand that there is a different kind of music which comes out of the experiences of people at given periods and that music which comes out of the experiences of black people is no less valuable or cultured. Not only should we appreciate our music out of the past but we should be proud of such soul brothers as Ray Charles, Lou Rawls, and soul sisters like Aretha Franklin and Nancy Wilson.

Finally we have to do something about the way college is failing us by ignoring our history and heritage. The Political Action Committee will continue to bring people to campus who will deal with areas that the college is completely ignoring; discussion groups will also elaborate on these areas.

REACH FOR THE TRUTH



KITTY GILPIN SMITH

Editor—Frances Jones
Reporters—Lenora Brewer
Pat Evans
Howard Spencer
Clays Tinsley
Lorraine Hamlin
Typist—Loretta Johnson