

Minnesota - none

Mississippi - A Police Brutality.

There were some instances of police brutality in Mississippi in the period under study. In 1950, in Indianola, a deputy sheriff of Sunflower County and a Chicago (Illinois) private detective were convicted of beating a confession out of four Negroes. The alleged victim of murder was later found alive and well. That was an instance in which the media of justice of Mississippi proved adequate. (AJC & NAACP, 1951 at 22-38.) Other instances occurred in 1952. In Columbus, tenant farmer, Robert Lee Cobb, a suspect in the fatal shooting of a local white plantation owner was killed as he fled barefooted from his cabin. In Lawrence, Tobe Faulkner was slain by a deputy mob that poured fire and tear gas into his home before finally shooting him. Faulkner had allegedly wounded a white man in an argument over a cow. In Jackson, five former law officers



admitted torturing a Negro prisoner, were freed by a Federal jury. The Negro testified that he had been handcuffed and beaten in an attempt to make him confess to a robbery of which he was later acquitted. This was an instance in which the administration of justice broke down. — (AJC & NAACP, 1952 at 24-45.)

B. An instance of the government cooperating in suppression occurred when Dr. Clinton C. Battle, who claimed economic and voting right reprisals, went to the F.B.I. He claims that a Mississippi agent advised him to see the sheriff. — (Carter, The South Strikes Back, 126-27 [1959].)

Although it is difficult to prove, in light of the refusal of the grand jury to indict, it is generally considered that the Mac Parker lynching involved the State's cooperation in suppression of the minority member, in this case by his lynching. Parker, a Negro, was picked out of line up of 25 men by the victim of an alleged rape. He was later taken from the jail, beaten and lynched. The reaction in the community included a belief that the



lynchers had come from elsewhere and that Parker was guilty and got what he deserved. Sixty F.B.I. agents engaged in investigations for a month following the lynching. The names of the murderers were known and turned over to the Governor who promised to deliver them to a grand jury six months later. Meanwhile, no arrests were made. It has been asserted that had Parker been tried and convicted, under the Goldsby Case, the conviction would have been invalid because of systematic exclusion of Negroes from juries. — ("Meditations on Poplarville," 188 Nation 505 [1959].) ; "Lynchings and the Law" 70 Commonweal 140 [1959].) In 1948, in Jackson, a white newsman was questioned by police following his attendance at a Negro Civil Rights meeting. — (Pattern of Violence" supra note 60.)

#### C. Interracial Violence.

There were numerous instances of such violence in Mississippi. In 1950, one of the nine averted lynchings nearly occurred in Mississippi. Four Negro members of 1 family, however, were killed in that state in that year. — (AJC & NAACP, 1950 at 1330.) In 1952, a white newspaper man from Fargo, North Dakota was taken for a ride



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Dr. E.J. Stringer, a dentist and leader of the NAACP was the victim of economic reprisal. A Negro teacher, who was a patient, found herself fired when she paid a dentist bill for having contributed to the NAACP.

A member of the city council of a city here and a local police officer warned the president of an NAACP branch ~~to~~ to post a sign over his business which read ~~the~~ "For Colored ~~only~~ Only." The reason, he was told, was to protect his place from bombing by "poor whites." He refused and economic pressure was ~~not~~ applied. ---/

(Hill, "The South in Conflict," New Leader, April 2, 1956, p. 3,4.)



and threatened by two masked men in Tupelo. — (AJC & NAACP, 1952 at 24-45.) Earlier in 1948, violence was threatened in Dentville when a white mob gathered to track down Negro murder suspects. — ("Pattern of Violence," supra note 60.) In Belzoni in 1956, a Negro voter was followed home from the polls and slashed with a knife. In a second case, in the same year, Reverend Lee was shot and killed in his car. — (New Republic, May 7, 1956, p. 12.)

#### D. Conspiratorial Groups

There is almost no reported KKK activity in Mississippi. There is, however, WCC activity reported and some violence has been attributed to that organization. The WCC movement in Mississippi has been termed the strongest in the South. The movement has the support of the ~~majority~~ or is feared by, the majority of the people in the state. — (So. Reg. Coun., Op. Cit. supra at note ....) Five unsolved murders in Mississippi have been attributed to the WCC. One is that of the Reverend George Lee, who was allegedly shot by the WCC members, but assertedly shot by another Negro. The



coroner jury verdict was death by "causes unknown". An attempted murder of Gus Courts failed. Courts is a Negro who was active in encouraging Negro voting. He was shot in his store. He and the one eye witness, Mrs. Luton, who was subsequently taken from the relief rolls when she refused to change her story, both testified that the killer was white. The murder of Roy Metton ended in an acquittal when the ~~defense~~ defense of self-defense was accepted by the jury. — (Carter, Op. Cit. supra at note \_\_\_\_; New Republic May 7, 1956, p. 12.)

E.

The other two unsolved murders apparently did not involve the WCC. One was that of ~~thundix~~ Lemar Smith, who was shot at mid-day before the court house in the presence of a number of witnesses. Three white men who were indicted were never brought to trial. One of the main reasons was that no white man was willing to testify against another in the murder of a Negro. Another travesty of justice apparently occurred when the killers of Emmett Till were freed by a jury. — (Ibid.) The Emmett-Till case occurred



in 1955. Till was a fourteen year boy who ~~went~~ went from Chicago to Mississippi for a vacation. There he whistled at a pretty white woman. This marked him for death. He was killed that night. Later his battered body was found in a river. <sup>/</sup> ("Death in Mississippi," 62 Commonweal 603 (1955).) An extended account of the event was presented by Look Magazine in 1956. This account which will follow in this footnote, has been attributed to the <sup>by the people</sup> killers who are believed/in their own community to have sold the story to Look Magazine. Look does not release the source of the information. According to this account, Till squeezed the woman's hand, ~~at~~ asked her for a date, and "caught her at the waist." ~~His wife approved killing in Mississippi~~ Huie, "Approved Killing In Mississippi," Look, Jan. 26, 1956, p. 46.) Then, while being hustled away by those who awaited him outside he "wolf whistled." The woman involved and her sister-in-law, decided not to tell their husbands, but Brynt, the husband heard about the event from <sup>o</sup> <sub>^</sub> Negro. His wife confirmed it. "<sup>/</sup>For him" Brynt to have done would have marked him a coward and a fool." (at 47). The intention



of the ~~kidnappers~~ was to "just whip him. . . and scare some sense into him," (at 47) They drove with him for nearly three hours.

He made no attempt to escape. He was then pistol whipped. He remained determined and did not submit, asserting his equality.

They then decided to kill him. He thought they were bluffing.

According to the article, the majority of the white people in

Mississippi ~~were~~ (1) either approved the action or (2) they don't

disapprove enough to risk giving their "enemies" the satisfaction

of a conviction. (at 50.) <sup>and</sup> ~~for~~ The best friend of J. W. Milan,

the brother-in-law of Bryant <sup>or</sup> and one of the acquitted killers of

Emmett Till, shot a Negro gas station attendant, Clinton Melton,

allegedly in self-defense. The killer Elmer Kimbell was acquitted. /

(Halberstam , "Tallahatchie County Acquits A Peckerwood," Reporter,

April 19, 1956, p. 26.)

On May 8, 1951, Willie ~~M~~ McGee was electrocuted for rape.

He was a Negro. No white man has ever been executed for rape in

Mississippi. / ("After An Electrocution," 68 Christ. Cent. 629 (1951).) <sup>1951</sup> ~~1952~~



On the other hand, there were exceptions to the absence of justice. In Silver City, a Negro plantation formen was shot and killed by a white farmer also a plantation employee. The latter was arrested and charged with premeditated murder, although he expressed resentment because his victim had held a job "over white folks." In Jackson, a white garage owner was charged with assault with intent to kill and was released under \$5000 bond. It was claimed that he shot and wounded a Negro farm boy who had come to his garage to inquire about the purchase of a used truck. (AJC & NAACP, 1952 at 24-45.) In 1953, in Benoit, a justice of the peace was charged with the death of a Negro share-cropper who had argued with him over a grocery bill. In Jacksonville, a white man was found guilty of attempting to kill his Negro maid and was sentenced to ten years. (AJC & NAACP, 1953 at 26-44.)

G.

As of 1953, there were three police officers employed in Mississippi. (Negro Police In The South, 1953, supra note \_\_\_\_.)