

From Myrlie Evers-Williams and Manning Marable, eds., *The Autobiography of Medgar Evers: A Hero's Life and Legacy Revealed Through His Writings, Letters, and Speeches* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

66 "Seven Negroes Arrested for Boycott Role," *United Press International*

DECEMBER 8, 1961

CLARKSDALE, Miss. (UPI)—Seven Negroes were arrested today on charges of "withholding trade" from downtown merchants.

They were later released on their own recognizance.

The arrests followed a Negro boycott against white merchants for what the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People called discriminatory practices.

The seven, including Aaron Henry, state head of the N.A.A.C.P., were seized under a state law that prohibits "conspiracy to prevent others from exercising lawful trade or calling."

In Jackson, Medgar Evers, N.A.A.C.P. field secretary, called the arrests "a violation of our constitutional rights."

The charge is a misdemeanor. If convicted, each faces a minimum fine of \$25 and a possible sentence of one to six months.

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67 Medgar Evers to Alfred Baker Lewis

February 1, 1962

Mr. Alfred Baker Lewis
20 West 40 Street
New York 18, New York

Dear Mr. Lewis:

At the request of Mr. Current, Director of Branches, I am submitting an account of Voter Registration in the McComb, Mississippi area since July 1961.

During the month of August the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee moved into McComb, for the widely publicized purpose of Voter Registration in schools and clinics; during the remaining months of 1961 much was written, seen and heard about McComb and vicinity.

Out of all the publicity surrounding McComb, Amite County, and Walthall County, a total of not more than twenty (20) persons were registered, and this was in McComb alone.

Prior to the coming of SNCC the NAACP had quietly worked with local Voter Registration Committees in McComb to enroll more than 250 Negroes on the registration books, while in Walthall County the NAACP had worked through its branch members and had gotten them to file complaints with the Justice department for denial of registration who in turn filed suit early in 1961 to forbid such discriminatory practices against Negroes.

Amite County presented a much more difficult problem for us; however, through our unit there we had begun to eradicate the fear among Negroes and had gotten many Negroes to go down and attempt to register. The rash actions of some of the members of SNCC and the consequential shooting (to death) of Herbert Lee (a Negro), by a State Representative further embedded fear among Negroes that they should not try to register at this time.

So it is that we are not able to get Negroes in Amite County to do what they were otherwise trying to do for themselves, before the arrival of SNCC.

It is my hope that this sheds a bit of information on our situation here as it relates to the work that we are trying to do as well as our problems.

Sincerely yours,

Medgar W. Evers
Field Secretary

Alfred Baker Lewis (1897-1980)—Lewis was an active member of the American Socialist Party in Massachusetts, and managed the Party's Rand School in New York City. He began his association with the NAACP in 1924, and served the organization as treasurer and member of the board of directors for over forty years. See "Alfred Lewis Dead, Ex-NAACP Leader," *New York Times*, October 31, 1980, D17.

68 Medgar Evers, Address, Men's Day Program

JULY 22, 1962

SUBJECT: TODAY'S CHALLENGE FOR TODAY'S MEN
NEW JERUSALEM M. B. CHURCH, JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

Pastor, Christian friends, brothers and sisters, ladies and gentlemen I consider it a blessing from Almighty God to have this very special opportunity and pleasure in fellowship with you on this men's day program and to be able to acknowledge the very presence of God within us.

Today we are witnessing a great transition. Things that were unimaginable 15 years ago are realities today. The cotton-picking machine was hardly thought of as being a remote possibility, space ships were fantasies, only to be found in Buck Rogers cartoons or some other unrealistic place. Transmitting a live program from Broadway, in New York City, or Sunset Strip, in Hollywood, California, to the back woods of Amite County, Mississippi, could only be that of a miracle to happen once in a lifetime.

However, ladies and gentlemen and Christian friends, we have seen these things and many others come to pass, and doubtless there will be many, many others during your life span and mine. For example, man has been successful in landing an object on the moon