

United Church of Christ  
Commission for Racial Justice  
**CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL**

by Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.

**THE RIGHT TO VOTE:  
USE IT OR LOSE IT!**

The date was February 18, 1965. The place was Marion, Alabama. What happened there that night was to change the course of history dramatically. It would also have untold affect on the right of African Americans to vote in the South and throughout the country.

On that night in February, voting rights activists, including Albert Turner from Dr. King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), had organized a march. The march would show, again, that African Americans would not be intimidated by the unbridled violence inflicted on them by Alabama officials every time they tried to register to vote.

Soon after the march began, Alabama State Troopers rioted. They began beating and clubbing the demonstrators, among them an 84-year-old marcher named Cager Lee. Lee's grandson, Jimmie Lee Jackson, immediately came to his grandfather's aid and carried him into a nearby Black-owned restaurant. The troopers followed, still clubbing everyone in sight, including Jimmie Lee's mother. When he tried to protect her, the troopers promptly shot the young man point blank in his side. Then, propping him up, they shot him twice again. Jimmie Lee Jackson died seven days later.

This was the death which prompted voting rights organizers to initiate the Selma to Montgomery March to protest his murder. On March 6, 1965, the march was set to begin on the Edmund Pettis Bridge in Selma. As Movement organizers from SCLC

and SNCC (the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee), along with local residents, began to move forward, Alabama State Troopers viciously attacked the unarmed group.

Only this time it was different — the brutality was televised. Television viewers throughout the nation watched, horrified, as the evening news showed troopers relentlessly clubbing the fallen, many of them women. Movement organizers had endured countless acts of violence over the years during the voting rights struggle. However, this one act of senseless brutality, fed to America with its TV dinners, meant that the violence could not longer be ignored.

As a result of intense public pressure, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act which was signed into law by President Johnson on August 6, 1965. The Act cleared the way for the registration of hundreds of thousands of African American voters throughout the South.

This year a national committee has been formed, based in Selma, Alabama, which plans to commemorate the historic voting rights struggle there. The main celebration takes place on March 6th in Selma. The Annual National Celebration of the Right to Vote was initiated by Atty. Rose Sanders, the dynamic activist attorney from Selma. She and her husband, State Sen. Hank Sanders, have long been in the forefront of voter mobilization and education in the Alabama Black Belt. She speaks of the importance of beginning this yearly cele-

**'REAL' PRESIDENTIAL  
HOPEFUL JACKSON GETS NEW  
STAFF TO APPEAL TO WHITES**

by Larry A. Still  
NNPA News Service

WASHINGTON, D.C.—NNPA — Despite negative predictions by media speculators and inaccurate pollsters, Rev. Jesse Jackson has skillfully planned his campaign to become the first black candidate to capture the White

ly emphasizes he is not seeking racial victories, the ordained minister, civil rights activist and self-made World leader expects to get most of the 1,400 potential delegates in the 20 state elections next week based upon margins (plurality) provided by black voters. Only 2,080 delegate



Presidential Candidate Jesse Jackson

House by winning over 600 delegates in 13 key southern states in the Super-Tuesday primary elections, March 8.

Although Jackson constant-

bration throughout the country, saying, "Rather than every 20 years, we need to celebrate our voting rights victories every year—in our classrooms, our churches and our homes. We must keep uppermost in the minds of the community, and particularly our children, how many of us died for this precious right. And if we don't use it, we'll surely lose it."

Albert Turner, still a tireless civil rights worker in Perry County, Alabama, echoes these words in an inspiring television documentary, produced by WNYC-TV in New York City. Entitled, "Somebody Marched for Me," the film is about the continuing voting rights struggles in the Alabama Black Belt. Mr. Turner is shown pointing to the bullet-riddled gravestone of Jimmie Lee Jackson. He explains, "White racists still shoot at Jimmie Lee's grave. They keep trying to kill what he stood for but it won't die. And every time we vote, he lives again through us."

As the Presidential primaries and elections draw near, we would all do well to remember his words, and to remember, too, the blood which was shed throughout the years for the right to vote.

votes are necessary to win the presidential nomination at the Democratic Party convention in Atlanta in July.

"We're going to slam dunk the (political) ball and go all the way to the nomination and win the election (in November)," declared national campaign chairman Ron Daniels. Speaking in the jargon of sports-minded supporters in this Olympic and basketball championship season, Daniels stated the new "All American" candidate's Rainbow Coalition strategy.

Referring to Jackson's growing new appeal to white voters, Daniels insisted, "We're not taking the Black vote for granted. We know where our (power) base is." A former advocate of an independent, black political third party, Daniels is southern regional director of Jackson's campaign in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, North Carolina, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia, all of which have over 500 black delegats.

However, five other Democratic challengers, including top leaders Gov. Michael Dukakis (Mass.) and Rep. Richard Gephardt (Mo.) are invading the South with the "Big Momentum" of victory in predominantly white voting norther states, such as Iowa, New Hampshire, South Dakota and Minnesota, where Jackson surprised the

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**HILL**

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considerations direct U.S. military intervention in Haiti would be a mistake. But there are things the U.S. government can do to try and head off a repeat of election violence and demonstrate its support of the true aspirations of Haiti's people.

First, the Administration must insist that the elections be postponed until the Haitian junta recognizes the exclusive authority of the constitutionally mandated Provisional Electoral Council as completely independent of the Army and the ruling junta. Anything less than a complete endorsement of the council will be interpreted by the ruling generals as a sign that the U.S. is willing to accept something less than genuine democracy.

Second, U.S. policy objectives must include support for the popular democratic opposition. Such support would demonstrate to Haiti's people that the U.S. is truly committed to the emergence of a democratic political infrastructure.

Third, the U.S. should make it clear to the Army that any future support would be contingent on its human-rights behavior and neutrality in the electoral process. At the same time, the U.S. should use any economic leverage to convince Haiti's tiny economic elite that it too has a stake in ensuring democracy in their country.

After the fall of the Duvaliers, the U.S. placed an inordinate trust in the army-

dominated National Governing Council, and turned its back on the cronyism, human-rights abuses, and corruption that have marked its tenure. It is now time that the generals realize that this country is firmly committed to true democracy, and will not tolerate a return to the dark days of Duvalierism.

**CHILD**

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friends, family members, and neighbors registered to vote. Next year our nation will be choosing a new President and many new Senators, Congressmen and Governors. We will be making dozens of other choices that are closer to home, selecting school board members and other local government officials.

You can help make sure that more of us to go to the polls next year. Ask young people you know if they are registered and, if not, urge them to do so. Registration is simple and easy now. Contact your city or state Board of Educations for details.

The Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice welcomes expressions of all views from readers. Letters should be kept as brief as possible and are subject to condensation. They must include signature, valid mailing address and telephone number, if any. Pseudonyms and initials will not be used. Because of the volume of mail received, unpublished individual letters cannot be acknowledged. Send to: Letters to the Editor, The Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice, 1201 S. Eastern Ave., Las Vegas, Nevada 89104.

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