



UNITED LEAGUE OF MISSISSIPPI WEST COAST TOUR



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1. The United League was formed in 1967 in Holly Springs, Marshall County, in northern Mississippi. Today, the United League has over 70,000 members in chapters in over 15 counties throughout northern Mississippi and spreading into Alabama and Tennessee. The United League is a broad based Black organization, with members from all walks of life including working people, ministers, professionals and youth.

2. The United League organizes around many issues and concerns of Black people. They have been active in fighting against discrimination in employment, police harassment and KKK terror, and the theft of Black land, etc. The United League believes in justice, dignity, equality self-respect and freedom.

3. The United League has a long history of fighting militantly for Black freedom. The first major struggle led by the United League was in 1967-1968 in Marshall County. The United League led a 90% effective boycott of the schools, protesting the removal of Black teachers and principals from the schools during the desegregation process. The United League won its demands and Marshall County is the only county in Mississippi where Blacks were able to keep their positions in the public schools.

4. The United League has organized to win justice for Blacks killed by racists. Over the past few years, several people in the area surrounding Tupelo have been victim of racist attacks and murder.

In 1974, Butler Young, Jr., a 17 year old Black youth from Byhalia, was shot in the back by a policeman. In 1975, Mr. A.B. Hampton was walking home from a ballgame through a white community. When some dogs began to bark, a white man opened fire on Mr. Hampton, shooting him 16 times and killing him! In September 1977, Mr. Mc Clendon protested the racist treatment of his daughter by a white storeowner. Because he spoke out, the storeowner shot him down in the street and killed him.

The Black community of Tupelo had had enough. Through their organizing, they demanded justice for Mr. McClendon and mass sentiment and pressure led to the killer's conviction - the first time in the state of Mississippi that a white person was convicted for killing a Black.

5. In Tupelo, the United League organized an economic boycott in February of 1978, which is still going on today. It has been 80% effective. The United League demanded an affirmative action hiring program, so that Blacks would be represented in city positions in proportion to their population. In Tupelo, Blacks make up 30% of the population. In November, the city agreed to an affirmative action plan, which the United League calls a "step forward" but still not adequate. The plan only applies to municipal jobs, and not to schools, ADC, and other public jobs.

6. The United League is continuing also to demand that all charges against boycott picketers who were harassed and arrested during boycotting, be dropped. Also, that two Black workers at the city sanitation department, who were fired because of their association with the United League, be

re-hired with full back pay and seniority. The United League has set a December 15 deadline for these demands, and if they are not met, picket lines will go back up in the downtown and shopping mall areas.

7. The United League has also led a struggle in Tupelo to get two racist cops removed from the police force. These two cops were notorious for their racist treatment and beatings of Blacks. Due to mass pressure, the two cops resigned during the summer.
8. The United League is protesting the investigation being conducted by the Legal Service Corporation, into the Northern Mississippi Rural Legal Services office. This investigation threatens to cut off funding. It is aimed at the many legal workers and lawyers at the Northern Mississippi Rural Legal Services who have taken an active part in the struggle, both in and outside of the courtroom. Lewis Meyers, head of Litigation at the NMRLS, is threatened with suspension and state bar disciplinary procedures, and was told, "no more speeches". Lewis will be one of the United League representatives coming to California for the Speaking and Fundraising Tour.
9. In Tupelo, the United League also supports the current strike of the workers at Purnell's Poultry Pride. The Purnell workers, mainly Black women, are fighting for unionization and better working conditions.
10. In Corinth, the United League has taken up the struggle to free Tom Porter. Porter is a Black worker who was sentenced to five years for "assaulting" his foreman.
11. In Okolona, the United League is engaged in much struggle. Okolona has been an area with very active United League activity and also very active KKK activity. During the summer, the KKK fired 16 shots at the station wagon of United League leader Dr. Howard Gunn. Rather than turn tail and run, the United League responded in kind and wounded one KKK.

In Okolona, the United League has also been boycotting businesses, and students have boycotted classes. In November, a Black-owned gas station was burned down. This was one of the few places where Blacks were patronizing, due to the boycott.