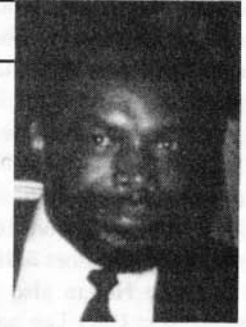


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Interview: Jim Evans

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# The privatizers are pirates coming to steal from taxpayers

*Representative Evans serves in the Mississippi state legislature from District 70, covering mid-town and downtown Jackson. He is a member of the Public Health Care Committee, chairman of the Black Caucus Health Care Committee, and serves as secretary-treasurer of the Delta Energy and Economic District, a seven-state consortium dealing with health care, infrastructure, and economic development in the states bordering the Mississippi River. He was interviewed on Jan. 9 by Suzanne Rose.*

**EIR:** I understand there's going to be a big fight over privatization next week in the Mississippi legislature. Could you tell us what is going to happen?

**Evans:** I hope what's going to happen is that we are going to win, that the taxpayers of Mississippi are not going to be ripped off any further by these privateers, who happen to be almost straight-out bandits raiding the treasury. What we have attempted to do in Mississippi is to make sure that we get a dollar's worth for the dollar that we spend. We've had a test case where a private company, Maximus, has collected child support for six months in two counties. We found out that for every dollar that they spend, the state gets back about 28¢ in collections, so it's not a good deal. What I hope prevails in the legislature is that we go back to equipping our state workers and state employees and paying them a decent wage with decent equipment, so that we can collect every dollar that can be collected for child support in this state.

**EIR:** What form is the fight taking?

**Evans:** The governor and others are running commercials as if they are campaigning for office, to privatize statewide so that this firm out of Virginia can collect about \$90 million a year from the taxpayers of Mississippi, while collecting about \$30 million in child support funds. They are going to take the majority of the money and stuff it in their pockets. What is happening in Mississippi is that they are not just trying to privatize child support collections, but they are trying to privatize all services, so that the citizen won't be able to come and demand from the government their services, but these private contractors will be in charge. They'll be in the business of making a profit and not solving problems.

**EIR:** What kind of a company is Maximus?

**Evans:** My information says that they have been kicked out of a lot of states. If you check California, Texas, and Tennessee, they can probably tell you that they are not a very dependable company, because they are no longer there. The biggest problem I have with them is that they are not needed in Mississippi. We have a dedicated workforce who are increasing child support collections every day. They are understaffed and underfunded, but if they were funded properly, we could get this job done by paying decent wages.

**EIR:** Is there a bill before the legislature to privatize all health and human services?

**Evans:** They want to privatize economic assistance workers. You know, we had this slave labor bill, passed and approved by the people in Washington [the Department of Health and Human Services signed a waiver the previous week—ed.] where they can take people's food stamps and AFDC [Aid to Families with Dependent Children] benefits and transfer them into dollars and give them to an employer who pays the worker \$1 an hour plus food stamp benefits. They would be forced to work on these jobs and forced to endure sexual harassment, and other kinds of harassment, because if they quit these jobs, they can't go back on food stamps or back on AFDC. We are going to be sending a lot of our people into slave labor-type camps.

**EIR:** This is a pilot project in how many counties?

**Evans:** It's in seven counties.

**EIR:** Is there a move to expand this statewide?

**Evans:** Statewide. The governor is trying to get the apparatus going in these seven. There's nobody in the agency who understands how to do it, but as soon as they figure out how they're going to implement it in these counties, they will come right back for statewide implementation. It's the same with Maximus. The contract they signed with Maximus for the child support, even though they are only doing it in two counties, is a statewide contract.

**EIR:** Can you tell me anything about the employment situation? What kinds of jobs are they talking about?

**Evans:** They are talking about bringing back the sweatshops. Basically what they have done is, they've read this book by Chuck Colson [*Making America Work*] about the conditions in the Soviet Union slave labor camps, and they're trying to implement these camps in Mississippi. The jobs that they are going to offer these ladies are jobs in garment sweatshops and chicken plants, and other places where the working conditions are deplorable, a situation where you wouldn't send your enemy.

**EIR:** Where you have to force people to work because after several months they get so crippled up?

**Evans:** There are no safe working conditions and no one is even concerned about working conditions, they just want to get the chickens plucked.

**EIR:** Is there anything coming up in the legislature immediately around prison privatization?

**Evans:** We had a special session a few months ago that authorized 2,000 beds to be privatized in a contract with Wackenhut; we all know these prisons are strictly slave labor camps and, in most cases, they are run by what I would call the white supremacists, the Nazi element in our society, and we've jumped into it in a big way with the 2,000 beds. Hopefully, this will be the end of it, because it's a dangerous thing when society is condoning slave labor camps, and it is absolutely certain that these prison camps are going to end up as slave labor camps.

**EIR:** Is the prison budget being expanded?

**Evans:** The budget includes \$43 million to fund private prisons and \$68 million to build 5,000 new beds in the next few months.

**EIR:** Can you tell me anything about the notorious Mississippi Sovereignty Commission, which is reported to have kept files on 50,000 citizens? I understand you are part of a court suit to open their files.

**Evans:** The Sovereignty Commission is the link between the Nazi element and the Ku Klux Klan element in our society, which tries to subvert every law for decency passed in the state of Mississippi. It functions as a state-funded agency, but one charged by any means necessary, to deny black citizens the right to participate in their government. That's the purpose of it. An ex-federal judge who was a senator at that time, who later became Governor Colman, stated the purpose of it in open debate in the House right after *Brown v. Board of Education* [which desegregated public education]. They formed the commission to guarantee that blacks made no gain in Mississippi, and they slashed and burned and murdered and destroyed black folks (and kept files on them), and they continue to do so.

**EIR:** They spied on people?

**Evans:** Absolutely.

**EIR:** Is this grouping connected in any way to the apparatus which is bringing in privatization?

**Evans:** They are connected to the apparatus that is bringing the privateers into town. They are not directly connected to the companies themselves. The hate-mongers who go out after this type of thing are the same people who keep the Sovereignty Commission alive.

**EIR:** Was the new head of the prison system, Mr. Ingram, at one time the head of the FBI's Cointelpro?

**Evans:** His position is higher than the prison system. He is the Commissioner of Public Safety for the State of Mississippi. . . . He is very close with the people in Wackenhut. They are both retired FBI officers, Mr. Ingram and Mr. Wackenhut, and they served together.

**EIR:** What is the relationship of Sen. Trent Lott, Haley Barbour, and the Oliver North apparatus to these moves to privatize?

**Evans:** You've got to realize who the top people in this country are: Haley Barbour is chairman of the [Republican] Party, Mrs. Spivey is head of research and education for the party, Trent Lott is the number-two man in the Senate; they are all Mississippians. They have campaigned openly for privatization. They introduced Governor Fordyce to most of the folks who are coming in. They are not only pushing for it in Mississippi, but they are pushing for it nationwide. Quite frankly, we view it as taking back all the gains that were fought and died for in the 1960s—it is to take back what our Bill of Rights was set up to protect. We see these people in Mississippi as the greatest internal threat to liberty.

**EIR:** Are you sponsoring two bills to stop privatization?

**Evans:** We've put them in a cage and stopped the spread of it like cancer in the special session. And we're going out now to try to root it out. Privatization as practiced by these Republicans today is simply the art of taking taxpayers assets and giving them away to their friends as favors. That's what it is. They are pirates. They are bandits. We are presenting to the taxpayers of Mississippi a factually stated case to show that these people are not coming in to better the state of Mississippi, but to steal. We're going to stop it altogether. We feel it is the role of government to provide for the general welfare of the population. That is the job of government, and we are going to make sure the government does what it is charged to do.

I hope your readers understand that the capital of Mississippi, Jackson, is the front line right now, even though we know that it is spreading all over the nation. Those who are fighting for privatization nationwide are determined that Virginia and Mississippi be the shining stars that they are going to point to, as they try to continue it nationwide. We are going to do what we can to stop it here.