

The Federal Government, through the person of the President, has more than ample authority to make sure that the Constitution and the laws of the United States relating to the civil rights of all its citizens are enforced and scrupulously adhered to. So far, in the registration drives of Negroes in the Deep South states, especially Alabama and Mississippi, the Federal Government has not been as effective as it might be in ensuring Negroes the right to vote. ~~There is no need for further legislation --~~ Adequate enforcement of present laws, rather than waiting for the deaths of those involved in demonstrations, will be a great step forward in the assurance of constitutional rights to all citizens.

Amendment I of the Constitution of the United States:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

Amendment XIV of the Constitution:

"Section I. All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

The attempted march to Montgomery by Selma Negroes to protest the denial of their right to register to vote, as well as the police brutality used in this denial, was clearly within their constitutional rights as guaranteed by the 1st Amendment. The action of the state troopers as ordered by Governor Wallace in breaking up the march was -- especially because of the brutality of beatings and teargas used in the process -- a clear violation of the constitutional rights of the marchers, according to the 14th Amendment.

Court proceedings have begun that may eventually end in the arrest of state troopers involved in the beatings. However, through enforcement of Federal laws under which these troopers may be indicted along with others relevant to the situation, the Federal Government can take action -- such as sending Federalized troops to Selma -- that will be effective in protecting citizens from such brutality as they are exercising their constitutional rights, such as peacefully assembling to register to vote. These sections that can be enforced are described below: