

NEGRO STUDENT VOTE WORKERS

A R R E S T E D

Five young students from the Mississippi Delta, including one 17 year old, were arrested in Indianola yesterday, August 30th., for distributing handbills without a license. The students are a part of a team of young people working so that all Negro citizens of voting age may register and vote.

Students volunteer their time.

The Mississippi voting program is under the direction of a council of leading citizens, Negro and white, of the state of Mississippi. All but two of the team are natives of Mississippi. They do not receive pay. Their room, board and expenses are supplied by local communities and the Voter Education Project.

Students have Police "Protection" in Indianola???

Thirteen members of the team came to Indianola yesterday to canvass and invite Negroes to a meeting at Bryant's chapel. The purpose of the meeting was to have been to teach Negroes to register and vote. City police have watched the team since it first arrived in Indianola. They tell us they are watching us for our own benefit, because some of the Negro citizens of Indianola might attack us, and beat us up! We believe this "protection", is harassment, both for us and the Negro citizens of the town, who are lead to think we are doing something illegal.

Negroes from Ruleville come to Indianola to register.

The young people first came to town Tuesday, August 14, with five citizens from Ruleville who wanted to register to vote. All five were permitted to fill out the registration form at the same time. Thursday, August 16, some of our team came with four more citizens from Ruleville. This time they were made to fill out the form one at a time.

Registrar Closes the Office!

Last week, on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, more Negroes from Ruleville came to Indianola to register, but the registrar's office was closed each time!

Investigation on Tuesday, August 27th.

On Tuesday, August 27th., we began working to get people from Indianola interested in the voting program. We had not been in town two hours when the police picked up the drivers of our cars and carried them to city hall for an "investigation". They told us that what we were doing was perfectly alright, but some of the Negro citizens might object. They wanted all our names, so that if we got into trouble with

"their" Negroes, they would know what it was about. The two drivers supplied their names, but the rest of us refused. We returned from the police station to finish our canvass and left town.

Arrests on Thursday, August 30th.

Thursday we were back again about 1:00 P.M. By 3:00 P.M. five of our team had been arrested and we were all down to city hall again.

Who are the Negro "leaders"?

In the meantime, we had learned that the police had circled the Negro section of town Tuesday night, looking for a mass meeting; that Rev. James Bevel's name was circulated among Negro "leaders" of the town and they were asked not to allow him back to speak at any of the churches; that a group of Negro "leaders" were called to City Hall for a special meeting with city officials and warned about letting us work in Indianola.

Justice Department Investigating in Indianola.

While the five students were being booked some of our team made phone calls to our lawyer, the press, and the United States Department of Justice. Our lawyer came down to Indianola to pay the bond, but the Mayor could not be "found" anywhere and they had to stay in jail overnight. Lawyers from the Justice Department flew into Memphis last night and are on their way to Indianola today to investigate the situation.

The Mayor makes a phone call, sees "trouble" in the air.

The rest of the team continued to canvass for the meeting, but discovered the church was no longer available. According to the officers of the church, the mayor and a state representative from Sunflower county called an officer of the church and told him we were going to have a political meeting and the city would begin taxing the church as private property if we were permitted to meet. The officer was reportedly told there would be "trouble" if the meeting were to take place.

Classes held on sidewalk.

Refused a place to meet, we talked to groups of people on the church steps and on the sidewalks. Giving them copies of the voter registration form and teaching them how to fill it out. Almost two hundred people were gathered in groups around the church.

No Meeting Place Down Here???

Is it possible that the Negro citizens of Indianola do not have one place where they may hold meetings to teach the people how to register to vote? If so, then we will have to teach them from door to door in their homes.

G O T O T H E C O U R T H O U S E T O D A Y A N D R E G I S T E R ! ! !