

SPECIAL REPORT from the  
STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
3622 El Cajon Blvd.,  
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- Arkansas Project Report -

Arkansas offers civil rights workers the same harrassment and danger that Alabama does. An example was shown on February 20 when a young female SNCC worker was stopped by police, threatened with a dog, and then arrested. After her release, she was told to leave town and followed for some time by the Helena sheriff. Bombings and beatings have been increasing in proportion with SNCC's activities. Police and Klan brutality is by no means limited to Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia.

Workers of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee began work in Helena in November, 1963. The purpose is to organize the communities to run voter registration drives, and protest against discrimination in public accomodations. This summer Northern volunteers will help with this work, Working with the local people. Members of San Diego Friends of SNCC will be involved in the summer project.

Most of SNCC's efforts have been placed in the Southeast section of the state along the Mississippi River. The Ozark area, which has little or no Negro population, is the logical target for a "white folks" project.

Arkansas is very poor. According to a survey by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the Negro population of Little Rock was the poorest of any city in the United States, with a population of over 100,000 people. (Arkansas is first in one thing, however. The University of Arkansas has the number one football team in the nation!) Next to Mississippi, Arkansas spends less money per pupil in public schools, in teachers' salaries, and has the poorest per-capita income of any state in the country. The problem is a bi-racial one. The solution can come only by community work (black and white together), Federal aid, and--most importantly--equal rights for Negroes.

Needless to say, the vote must be given to all citizens. This is essential if the strong political structure of the state is to give way to a freer one. According to the 1960 census report, Arkansas has a total population of 1,786,222. Around 450,000 (25%) of these are Negroes. Somewhere in the vicinity of 210,000 of these are of voting age and October 1, 1964 (the last time anyone could register), there were approximately 85,000 registered Negroes in the state. When SNCC first came into Arkansas, there were 67,000 registered Negroes.

At this point, in early 1965, we have three main project areas with offices in Forrest City, Helena, and Pine Bluff.