

## PRESIDENT JOHNSON AND THE RIGHT TO VOTE

On Sunday, March 7, a group of unarmed American citizens set out from Selma on a march of peaceful protest for the right to vote. Their legal demonstration was smashed by a force of Alabama State Troopers. The demonstrators were gassed, clubbed, bullwhipped, and ridden down with horses.

On Monday, March 15, several hundred college students, demonstrating peacefully in Montgomery, Alabama for the right to vote, were ridden down, clubbed, and whipped by these same troopers.

In the week between these two demonstrations, dozens of attempts at peaceful, constitutional protest have been broken up or turned back by Alabama officials. Two men -- one black and one white -- have died for the right to vote. At the same time, President Johnson has refused to send in Federal forces to protect citizens from the Alabama police. Attn'y General Katzenbach has stated that Federal intervention was unnecessary in Alabama because "Law and Order" had not yet broken down.

Selma, in the past week, has become a "national crisis" -- but Negroes in Alabama see nothing new or strange in either Selma or Montgomery. Selma is just one more link in a chain of white brutality and supression that stretches back into Alabama history for a century or more. There are a thousand Selmas across the Deep South -- where the club and the whip (and sometimes even death) await the Negro who reaches out for his constitutionally guaranteed right to vote.

The State governments of Alabama and Mississippi maintain themselves by constant terror. They are built on the denial of the right to vote. "Law and Order," in the Deep South, means keeping the Negro "in his place." Negroes in Alabama and Mississippi will never be protected by their local officials. They need the right to vote - so that they can elect new officials. If Federal forces are not sent into the South there will be no free elections.

What is needed in the Deep South is not just a temporary DISPATCH of Federal forces to meet a specific "crisis" -- but a permanent Federal force which can maintain the law of the land until the entire "crisis" of racial oppression in the South is over. Federal officers should be stationed at key points in the Deep South -- on constant alert to PREVENT violence against people exercising their constitutional rights. These officers could make on-the-spot arrests of men like Sheriff Clark and Sheriff Rainey of Mississippi -- BEFORE they could use their clubs, guns, and lynch-mobs to "create a national crisis." These federal officers would not impose martial law, they would simply see to it that the Constitution of the United States was enforced.

THE PRESIDENT already has the power to create such a force under Section 333, Title 10 of the U.S. Code. NO NEW LAWS ARE NEEDED.

New laws, no matter how good, will mean nothing to the people of the Deep South until they are enforced. The real laws in Alabama are made on the spot by the men with the guns and whips.

If the President really wants "Law and Order" in Alabama, he MUST ENFORCE THE LAW.

Appv'd: Comm. On Selma. P.J. Warshall