

FREEDOM
CHRISTMAS

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VOTER REGISTRATION VOLUNTEERS

The provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 are law, but they are not reality. To make real the equality which is promised by this Act, many national civil rights organizations are now working on major voter registration efforts. They have requested that students, black and white, northern and southern, aid in registering some of the thousands of Negroes who have been denied their Constitutional rights for over 100 years.

You can help as a recruiter or as one of the hundreds of volunteers who will be spending their Christmas vacations or semester breaks working in voter registration projects in the South.

The Need

After over three hundred years since the first slave was brought to America, after a civil war which ended slavery in the United States, after a one hundred year civil rights struggle, after five years of marches and demonstrations, the Congress of the United States passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Yet, in these three hundred years, these hundred years, these five years, what has been accomplished? Many people across the nation feel that the civil rights struggle has ended, that the Voting Rights "guarantee" of 1965 is the culmination and conclusion of the civil rights movement. But the Voting Rights Act does not end the war; it is only a battle.

The Voting Rights Act permits potential voters to turn to a federal examiner when they cannot register through the local authority. Yet in the South today local registrars still refuse to enter the names of Negro voters even when these have been registered by their federal counterparts. The local registrars must accept these names before these citizens can vote. The Justice Department has asked that the

Supreme Court rule on the Voting Rights Act immediately so that injunctions can be brought to force acceptance of these names.

In other areas, areas which do not have federal registrars, registration is very slow. Local registrars give token compliance to the Voting Rights Act by taking one, maybe two, candidates at a time, though lines outside the office may number fifty to one hundred persons who have taken time they can ill-afford to come to register.

And what will happen on election day? We cannot be sure, but the most recent southern election was a referendum ballot on August 17, 1965, in Mississippi. At some precincts Negroes were flatly turned away, some told Negroes that their precincts had been changed, some had to use separate ballot boxes (and the humility of separation is hardly the issue!), and others noted that the poll-watchers marked "colored" on their ballots.

The war does not end until every American Negro can vote--not register, but vote--and have his vote counted on the same terms as that of his white brothers.

IF large numbers of Negroes are registered with federal examiners, and IF the Justice Department gets the Supreme Court order it is seeking, it is possible that a black voice will be heard from the South in the 1966 elections. But the time for action is NOW, because:

FACT: In every one of the deep South states, a Senatorial seat, Congressional seats, and large portions of state, county, and municipal elections will be decided in 1966.

FACT: The primary elections which will affect so many of these seats will be held as early as May 3, 1966, too soon to be affected by a summer drive.

FACT: According to the latest available figures, over 1,700,000 eligible Negro voters have not yet been registered to vote in the states covered by the Voting Rights Act.

FACT: Much hard work and much national attention must be produced if the illegal blocks to registration are to be eliminated.

The Response - Freedom Christmas

In recognition of the extreme need and as a response to invitations extended by national civil rights groups, United States National Student Association will be recruiting students who are willing to sacrifice their Christmas vacations in the fight for equality. These students will work in established programs doing voter registration in the South. These programs, run by national civil rights organizations, are in need of assistance. If every school can provide only five