

NEWS RELEASE
STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SUES TO RELEASE
NEGROES IMPRISONED AFTER VOTE MEETING

GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI, JULY 9 -- Trial will begin July 11 here on a Justice Department suit to release 45 Negroes imprisoned after a voter registration meeting June 17 in neighboring Itta Bena. The Negroes -- who had walked to the town marshal's office to protest the smoke-bombing of their voter registration meeting -- were charged with "breach of the peace" and have been in Parchman Penitentiary since the date of their arrest.

James Forman, executive secretary of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee -- the group which has a voter registration program in the Mississippi Delta -- said today that the Department had filed for an injunction to restrain Leflore County officials from "intimidating those seeking to register and vote" and to release those already imprisoned.

The suit, entered in the U. S. District Court (North Mississippi) seeks to enjoin John J. Frazier, Jr., the Leflore County prosecutor; H. Ed Webber, the deputy sheriff of Leflore County and the town marshal of Itta Bena, and others.

Forman said that Leo Branton, an attorney from Los Angeles, would come to Greenwood tomorrow "to survey the situation here regarding the illegal deprivation of Negroes' rights here in the Delta." Branton is active in the Los Angeles Friends of SNCC chapter.

Forman said that four whites had been apprehended today for the smoke-bombing of a Negro home on Sunday night, and were given 30-day suspended sentences. He said, "Mississippi justice is reflected in the comparison of this sentence and the 6-month terms given Negro citizens who tried to protest lack of police protection in Itta Bena."