

POLICE CONTINUE HARRASSMENT OF RIGHTS WORKERS

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI - "Civil rights workers in Mississippi face arrest almost daily on charges ranging from 'running a stop sign' and 'public drunkenness' to 'carrying books calculated to incite people to overthrow the government'", according to John Lewis, Chairman of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

During an intensive mock political campaign across the state last fall, workers from SNCC estimated that police made over 60 arrests for traffic violations alone during a 21 day period. "Over 100 incidents of official harrassment" were recorded during November, 1963, when an integrated slate ran in a mock election for the state's two top offices.

Civil rights workers here have charged police are stepping up arrests as the summer approaches. As examples, they cite:

The overnight jailing in Holly Springs of four workers from the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) for "investigation";

The arrest of seven COFO workers in Belzoni on May 14. Police said they were arrested "to prevent riots" because the group was integrated;

The arrest in Oxford of six COFO workers May 5. They were charged with "suspicion of carrying materials which advocate the overthrow of the government" when police found college textbooks in a trailer behind their car;

The arrest in Jackson on May 24 of a white COFO worker, Dick Jewett, 20, of New York city. Jewett was charged with "vagrancy" and "public drunkenness";

The arrest of two University of Pennsylvania Law School students, Alan Lerner and Charles Woll, and SNCC worker Hunter Morey in Jackson May 25. The three, all white, were charged with "being fugitives";

The arrest May 25 of COFO worker Emily Shrader, 20, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, on "vagrancy" and "public drunkenness" charges;

The arrest that evening, three times, by Pennsylvania law student Woll on three different traffic counts;

SNCC workers expect such arrests to increase when 1,000 summer workers arrive in Mississippi July 1 to begin work on a COFO-sponsored "Summer Project."