

SNCC EXPANDS ARKANSAS VOTE WORK

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS - The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) opened a new state-wide office here January 3 to coordinate activity throughout Eastern Arkansas.

James O. Jones, 21, SNCC's Arkansas Project Director, said the anti-segregation group now has offices and projects in Helena, Pine Bluff and Little Rock.

Director Jones said existing projects cover much of Jefferson, Crittenden, Cross, Mississippi, Woodruff, St. Francis, Phillips, Lee, Monroe, Arkansas, Lincoln and Cleveland Counties.

Jones said he and William Hansen, a white SNCC staffer, will cover Little Rock, Pulaski County and surrounding areas, while other workers will divide other areas of SNCC focus.

Jones is an Arkansas native who attended Arkansas A. M. & N. College in Pine Bluff until he was expelled February 10, 1963 for participating in a SNCC-sponsored sit-in demonstration. He has been working for SNCC since then. Hansen has worked for SNCC in Maryland, Georgia and Alabama before opening SNCC's Arkansas drive in early 1963. His wife, like Jones, was also expelled from Arkansas A. M. & N for participating in sit-in demonstrations.

The Reverend Benjamin Grinnage will direct SNCC activities in the Pine Bluff area, Jones said. Grinnage, a Methodist minister, studied at Philander Smith College in Little Rock before joining the SNCC staff. Jones said the new Little Rock office would allow extended voter registration activity across the Arkansas Delta, where the state's Negro population is greatest.

He said the group's efforts over the past two years in Pine Bluff included integration of lunch counters and some job opportunities for Negroes and nearly doubling the number of registered Negro voters in Lincoln and Jefferson Counties.

Grinnage, who is former Chairman of the Pine Bluff Movement, compared Eastern and Southern Arkansas with Mississippi.

"Outside of Pine Bluff and Little Rock there has not been much progress," he said. "The pattern hasn't changed. Negroes still feel that they haven't any recourse because most of it has to depend on local law enforcement."

"The picture is comparable to Mississippi, except that we can vote," Grinnage said.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) has over 200 staff members working in Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi and Southwest Georgia.