Aug 8, 1964

Report on Freedom Democratic Party work toward educational meeting

Mattie Metz

Ed Vaughan and I worked First Ave Fishtown on Tuesday and Wednesday (Aug 4, 5). The first day we completed calls in 11 homes, seeking one where a meeting could be held. The found great interest expressed, and picked up 3 more party registrations.

The following day we completed calls in 16 homes. In them led me one home. This time we had some refusals to register with the party, the reasons given being fear & losing one's job, fear of losing one's pension, and damage to one's home. Several however even of those offered their support in other ways, especially through prayer. Among them expressing positive interest in the party, we secured 8 more registrations, making a total of 11 registrations on the street. Later, completed the calls, except 2 where people are working.

We found one one willing to set up a meeting and invite others in to talk about the work of the party. However, one woman said the neighbors would get together and discuss it. We left the informational material, which was received with great interest. Many said they knew Mrs. Divine and we suggested they invite her in to get first hand information.

You may have been some hesitation about talking these things over with strangers, especially white people who may not understand all that is involved. I believe that a precinct organization where people could work together on local needs—maybe such a thing as garbage collection or something less controversial like that—could develop a sense of working together that is greatly needed. This could lead to working on these more difficult matters (if any are more difficult than others). They all may be equally hard!

Working on this project has been a real privilege. I have enjoyed the persons I have met and those whose cooperation made it possible for us to be used to some extent at least. Personally, I have gained much in understanding what we who work for civil rights are up against, and I think those whose vision make it possible.