Voting Rights
Chapter 18 Sect. 3

- JFK urged SNCC to focus on voting rights instead of protests
- SNCC and CORE founded the Voter Education Project (VEP): this registered African-Americans to vote
- Voter marches were attacked and broken up by police
- VEP was successful; it registered \( \frac{1}{2} \) million African-Americans in the South
- Only in Mississippi was it unsuccessful as violence there was strong.

The Twenty-fourth Amendment

- The South used Poll Taxes to keep African-Americans from voting.
- Since most African-Americans were poor, they could not pay these taxes
- 24th Amendment banned poll taxes
- Freedom Summer: SNCC asked volunteers to spend their summer in Mississippi registering African-Americans to vote and instructing them in Civil rights and black history.
Crisis in Mississippi

- The 2nd day there, Andrew Goodman and two CORE workers, James Chaney and Michael Schwerner were arrested for speeding.
- They were released at night and nobody ever saw them again.
- 2/3 of the volunteers went home after this: the rest faced constant violence through the summer.
- The FBI arrested 21 suspects. Most were KKK members.
- Seven men were convicted: These were the first convictions ever in Mississippi for killing a Civil Rights worker.
- 17,000 African Americans registered to vote, when the state only accepted 1,600, it showed a federal law was needed.

Essential Questions

1. Why did the Federal Government prefer SNCC to focus on voter rights?
2. Why was the Twenty-fourth amendment needed?
3. What state was the most violent towards civil rights?
4. Why was the Freedom Summer event called?

Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party

- SNCC decided to try to clean racism up in the Democratic Party.
- MFDC elected 68 delegates to the Democratic National Convention.
- They were led by Fannie Lou Hamer and asked to be seated instead of the all white delegates sent by Mississippi.
- Lyndon Johnson tried to compromise and have 2 members seated.
- NAACP and SCLC agreed.
- But SNCC and MFDC disagreed with this token gesture.
- In the end, MFDC failed, SNCC started to split with SCLC.
SCLC and Voting

• After the Civil Rights Act of 1964, SCLC focused on voting rights.
• The Selma campaign: King organized marches in Selma, Alabama for voting rights.
• The arrest of King and kids forced the National media to step in.
• A massive Selma March was organized when another marcher was killed.
• Once again the police acted violently.

Voting Rights Act of 1965

• Due to the violence Lyndon Johnson called for tough voting rights law.
• Congress then passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by a large margin.
• This turned out to be one of the most important civil rights laws passed.
• Within weeks 27,000 African-Americans registered to vote in the South.
• Soon African-Americans were elected to offices on a local level.
• They would help break the political power of those that supported segregation.

Essential Questions

1. What was the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party?
2. Why did the MFDP not support Lyndon Johnson’s compromise, even though King did?
3. Why did Lyndon Johnson call for the Voting Rights act of 1965?
4. Why was the Voting Rights Act of 1965 such an important law?