

Introduction

A long look at Mississippi can help us understand our own communities and our neighboring communities, north and south, because Mississippi is not another country. Neither passports nor visas are needed to travel between it and other parts of the United States. There's no need to exchange currency and no necessity to submit helpless arms to needles full of immunization serum to obtain "re-entry."

For the worse, not the better, Mississippi is America.

Whatever corruption, vice, evil, pettiness, tyranny, callousness may exist in this nation flourishes *best* in the Magnolia State . . . and in its purest forms. These conditions lend themselves to study and analysis and possibly a discovery of cures for problems national in scope. Literally, Mississippi is an exaggerated New York, Illinois or California.

The delegates to the 1964 Democratic National Convention from the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party discovered this in Atlantic City when they found themselves being treated in the "North" as they are mistreated at home. Howard Zinn, historian, recognized this and described this phenomenon beautifully in his recent book, *The Southern Mystique*.

I, too, recognized it.

I am a Negro lawyer.

Almost a decade has passed since graduation from law school (Howard University/'56), during which time the bulk of my professional life has been spent handling what are known as "civil

rights" matters in most of the states of the Confederacy—usually as attorney for others, but on occasions as the arrested defendant, victim of an injunction, or plaintiff in an integration suit.

Recently home base was shifted to Washington, D.C., where I rest better at night. For years prior to coming to Washington, the base was in Norfolk, Virginia, as a member of the firm of Jordan, Dawley and Holt.

Such well-ordered plans as my life may have are arranged by unexpected (collect) long-distance calls' arriving at those hours of the morning when sleep is best. During 1964 several such calls caused me to sojourn in Mississippi for short periods during the months of April, May, June, July and September.

While in Mississippi in June, as the world became aware of the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project of 1964, several of us expressed concern about the obsession of the newsmen with the hundreds of beatings, shootings and jailings and the more than a dozen murders—including those of the three civil rights workers in Philadelphia, Mississippi. (By October, 1964, there were 15 murders, 4 woundings, 37 churches bombed or burned to the ground and more than 1,000 arrests.)

Our concern was that the violence would be dwelt upon to the exclusion of the positive achievements of the Summer Project and the message of Mississippi that needs to be heard everywhere—those matters which prevented the horrors from being in vain.

Staughton Lynd (coordinator of the freedom schools during their first two months of existence and professor of history at Yale) suggested that I act as a "wastepaper basket," i.e., historian.

With misgivings I accepted the *ordination* and began to collect clippings and memos, to take pictures and to tape interviews with persons engulfed in the task of not letting the work of the summer end. Out of this collection and my own experiences of pitching in every once in a while came this book.

Violence and death are not strangers to Mississippi: they were intimate fibers of life there before the summer of 1964; they are imminent and unforeseeable parts of every breath drawn in that state today. Tomorrow will be no different. It is the concern of this

book that there be an awareness of the "strangers": the achievements of the Summer Project. It is a further concern that there be an awareness that the septic conditions of Mississippi are not localized—that the state is a mirror.

Imperativeness surrounds the two concerns, because the Summer Project of 1964 is continuing; in fact, it is spreading to at least three more states (Alabama, Arkansas and Georgia) during the summer of 1965.

In a narrow sense, some aspects of the Summer Project failed. Take the voter registration program as an example. For the registration of Negroes in the state to be meaningful, new voters should flow from the clerk's office in the 82 counties of Mississippi like the "waters of a mighty river." Before the summer of 1964 the new voters being registered were but a weak trickle. In spite of Herculean efforts during the summer, that trickle remained a trickle.

But, in reality, nothing about the Summer Project could fail.

It was impossible for things to have grown worse.

As for specific achievements of the Summer Project, the four most impelling ones are these: the freedom schools, the white community project, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, and the *focus*. For the first time in a century, the state became a part of the national consciousness. World attention was riveted on it. As a nation we looked at it and examined it, although it was in much the same fashion as a physician studies human excrement to discover hidden diseases within the body.

So large and diverse was the Summer Project that it doesn't lend itself to discussion in pure chronological sequences. However, as far as possible, the organization of this book is chronological. It was the lynching of the three civil rights workers in Philadelphia which exploded the Summer Project into the world's awareness. The background of those murders is discussed in the first chapter. This is followed by chapters that discuss the preparation for the summer and how the Project nearly ended before it began, the training and arrival of the summer volunteers, and the role and nature of the federal government.

Subsequent chapters describe the freedom schools, the "White

Folks" Project, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, and the National Democratic Convention and the Congressional challenge.

The purpose of the book as a whole is to anatomize the work of one summer, showing what a living thing it became and how it shall go on living.

PART ONE

I

Philadelphia Lynching

Marvel not at Mississippi
For Hitler had a Mother—
Distant victories are proximate defeats.
'Cause the bitch that spawned him
Is in heat
Again.

—The Wisdom of Dawley

THE DRIVE WAS LONG from Oxford, Ohio: sixteen hours. They had left yesterday in the afternoon—James Chaney, Louise Hervey, Michael Schwerner, Andy Goodman and other volunteers on the Mississippi Project. James Chaney glanced at the speedometer, which showed that he was propelling the station wagon along at a safe 50 miles per hour, headed West on U.S. Highway 11 in Alabama. Ahead was the green sign they had been looking for, with its white letters. Someone read it aloud as they passed by:

“Welcome to Mississippi . . .
The Magnolia State”

The station wagon drove into Mississippi with its cargo of young people—all younger than Mickey Schwerner's 24 years—who were destined to man the projects of the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964, centered around Meridian, Mississippi. Louise Hervey marveled at the lush green countryside, hardly touched by the ravages of civilization. Everything looked so peaceful and calm. She

later related that she wondered how this could be the Mississippi that was described as being heinous. She challenged the characterization in her mind even though she recalled the parting scenes the day before, June 20, 1964, in Oxford.

Everyone had shaken hands so warmly and meaningfully and had drunk so deeply of each other's face and eyes. The parting of Mickey Schwerner and his wife Rita had been especially emotional and yet somber.

The blue 1964 Ford station wagon then turned on to Interstate Highway 59, where the speed-limit signs said that one could go 70 miles per hour. Yet Chaney increased the speed to only 55. This was Mississippi. A station wagon with whites and Negroes had to set its own speed limits—and set them somewhere below those given by the signs.

By the time the station wagon reached Meridian, the sun had risen higher. A sprinkling of neon signs gaudily flashed, and the buzz of the signs coming on and going off pierced the Sunday-morning quiet of vacant Meridian Streets.

At approximately 5:10 A.M., Sunday, June 21, 1964, the blue Ford station wagon drove down Twenty-fifth Street past the E. F. Young Hotel; made a right turn onto the one-way street, Fifth Avenue; and parked in front of the door of 2505½ in the space reserved for the Service Cab Company (for colored).

"Hey, Baby, welcome home," one of the taxi drivers waiting idly for his next run called out as he recognized Chaney and the station wagon. Soon the taxicab-stand folks emptied their small office and came out to the station wagon to introduce themselves, welcome Chaney and Mickey back, and assist the summer volunteers in carrying their belongings up the 31 stairs to the Movement office. (This office served many functions, including that of hotel when civil rights workers hit Meridian at ungodly hours.)

While Chaney checked the box marked "important," which contained urgent messages and matters needing attention, Mickey gave Andy, Louise and the others a quick tour of the five-room office, showing the 9,000 books, allocation of space, and private areas open only to staff working on the project. Mickey then explained the special uses of the several phones in the office, the necessity for

maintenance of a phone log of calls, and how that log was to be kept. He also pointed out the list of jails and police stations for all the counties around, including Meridian, with their phone numbers; a list of all the law enforcement officers; and the State Highway Patrol and the FBI numbers. One phone, 482-6103, was to be used primarily for outgoing calls. Another phone, 485-9286, was to be used for incoming calls. An important thing to remember was that every hour of the day, on the half hour, they had to check with the Jackson office to let them know that "all is well."

Louise Hermey was in charge of Meridian communications, seeing to the proper flow of messages into and out of the Meridian Project headquarters for an area that included Kemper, Clarke, Newton, Jasper, Lauderdale and Neshoba counties, all close to Meridian, which is located on the eastern border of Mississippi, half-way between the top and bottom of the state.

While the others claimed their luggage and got ready for rides to the private homes where they would stay, Chaney motioned to Mickey to come into the little inner office, where there was a small sink, the mimeograph machine and office supplies. There they talked quietly about Philadelphia and Neshoba. The church where the community center and freedom school were to have been operated during the summer of 1964 had been burned down, and three of the people who were the Movement's strongest supporters had been beaten.

This was serious. Something had to be done. The people in Neshoba had to get reassurance that the program could go on and should go on . . . or things never would get any better and the killings would never stop. The two men decided that they would go to Neshoba as soon as they had a few hours' rest. Because Andy Goodman had shown signs of being able to handle himself and to lead others effectively, he was put in charge of the freedom school to be operated in Neshoba if the Negroes there would still have one. In addition to acquainting Andy with the people with whom he would work, the trip would also provide the two veterans, Chaney and Schwerner, with an opportunity for another intense private session with Andy.

Chaney went to the outgoing-call phone and dialed a Meridian

number, 482-2327, the weather bureau: "Temperatures in the high nineties, clear skies, no rain, sunset at 7:05 P.M." The trip could be made, Chaney informed Mickey.

Orientation of the 750 summer volunteers had taken place at the Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio. Mickey (who had been working in Meridian since January, 1964), Chaney (who had been working with the Movement for nearly a year), and Preston Ponder (who had been working with the Meridian Project for several months) had joined the nearly 100 other Mississippi staff members at the Oxford, Ohio, campus on June 15, 1964, to meet and help orient the hundreds of college students who had volunteered for eight weeks of service in the Summer Project of 1964.

When Chaney and Mickey had left Meridian to drive to Oxford, Ohio, the Mt. Zion Methodist Church of Neshoba had been standing intact and committed to use as a freedom school. On June 16 it had been burned.

The trip taken on Sunday, June 21, 1964, had several purposes. First, the volunteers hoped to bolster any sagging spirits of those who might have faltered as a result of the recent burning of the church and beatings. Second, there was hope that some information could be gained as to who was responsible for the burning, in order that the FBI might be involved. There was hope that some sort of plan could be worked out whereby a national appeal could be made to raise funds to rebuild the church. Finally there was the hope that the program planned for the summer could continue in spite of the burning and beatings.

After approximately two hours' sleep, Chaney roused himself and drove to the Phillips 66 station on the block over from Fifth Avenue, where the Movement's Meridian office was. In addition to watching the Negro proprietor check the battery, radiator and oil, Chaney inspected the white-walled, heavy-duty, oversized Firestone tires on the rear wheels. This type of tire was vital to effective movement on the soft dirt roads so common throughout the Longdale section of Neshoba County. The inspection was visual and manual. Chaney's eyes and hands searched for sharp rocks and metal objects. A similar inspection was given to the front tires.

Around 9:30 A.M., Mickey Schwerner explained to Louise Hermev where they were going and what procedures she was to follow during the day: "There's an immutable rule here: no one is to remain in Neshoba after four P.M. If for any reason we aren't back by four P.M., you should alert Jackson and begin checking every city jail, county jail, sheriff's office, police station and hospital between Meridian and Neshoba. O.K.?"

"It will be done," she answered.

With a sense of urgency, Louise worked on convincing herself that these precautions about being back, regular checks, and arms over back seats and lookout positions when driving in cars were more or less routinized acts against dangers that were *possible* but not *probable*. It wasn't good for one to live full of the tensions that characterized persons who sleep cradled in a guillotine.

The Longdale community is unusual in Mississippi. Only Negroes live in it, and all own their own land. Of the more than 50 persons in the section, 3 are registered voters. In Neshoba County there are 5,000 Negroes, 10 of whom are voters.

Neshoba is a square-shaped county of approximately 568 square miles. Of the total population of 20,927, 28 per cent, or 5,901, are what the census calls "non-white." The county has but two law enforcement officers: Sheriff Lawrence Rainey and his deputy, Cecil Price. A sheriff and his deputy are particularly close in Mississippi; neither is salaried. Sheriffs get their income from a fee system and themselves hire, fire and pay such deputies as they may have.

Sheriff Rainey is a powerful figure with torso and limbs like a rhinoceros: he's 41, six foot two, 250 pounds and barrel-chested. His reddish, crackly skin hangs in pouches on his face from the constant carrying of oversized wads of chewing tobacco. Two Negroes have been killed by him in "self-defense." Prior to the assumption of the lawman's role, he was a mechanic.

Rainey's only deputy, Cecil Price, is a younger, less awesome replica of the sheriff.

With the aid of two State Highway patrolmen who live in the Philadelphia area, Cecil Price arrested Chaney, Mickey and Andy

and caused them and their well-known blue Ford station wagon, Mississippi license H-25503, to be transported into the populous area of Philadelphia, where the county jail and city jail are located.

Shortly after the arrest, a phone call was made to Meridian, where Sheriff Rainey was at a hospital with his wife.

When Deputy Price and the Mississippi State Highway patrolmen confronted the three young men, they were helpless. There are few phones in the county and no roadside telephone booths. The persons with phones would not have let them be used by a "nigger" or a "nigger lover." Some would have refused because of hate; others would have refused because of fear—fear that somebody might learn that they had been human to the enemy. The three young men had no radio to alert others of their danger. When they were arrested, Cecil Price was their god and they were his creation. Only he, Cecil Price, could have mercy on their souls.

Not only was Price god, but he was also the United States of America, the President, the Supreme Court, the Constitution and all the high-sounding principles and mouthings of a nation that is the wealthiest and most powerful country in the history of mankind. Mickey, Chaney and Andy knew this at the moment of arrest, when they stood at the gates of eternity. They had been told in unmistakable terms by the United States that their rights to freedom of speech, freedom of association, safety of their persons—and all the other rights—would be *protected* by local law enforcement agencies, which have the primary responsibility. "There is no federal police force," John Doar of the Justice Department had announced in Oxford, Ohio, at the orientation session.

When they were arrested, what rights they had by reasons of the laws and the Constitution were in the hands of Deputy Price. In accordance with his power and duty of being the United States Constitution, he then dispensed those rights.

Sometime around 4 P.M. on June 21, 1964, screams were heard in the area of where the jail is located. A passer-by described them as like those of "a baby caught in a fire," according to unofficial sources.

On June 21, 1964, the sun set at 7:05 P.M. in Philadelphia, Mississippi.

Philadelphia Lynching

According to Deputy Price, at 9 P.M., 10 P.M. or perhaps 10:30 P.M.—his versions differed—on a steamy, moonlit night, he, the Constitution of the United States, turned the three men loose after collecting a \$20 fine.

They were never seen alive again.

The will of *god* was done.

When the clock showed 3:30 P.M. on June 21, 1964, Louise Hermeley became concerned, but she said little to the other summer volunteers. Between 3:30 P.M. and 4:00 P.M. she walked repeatedly from the inner office, where the phones were, to the window of the room 21 steps away and peered out on the street past the Joe Louis Café on Fifth Avenue and down past the E. F. Young Hotel on Twenty-fifth Street. Her fingers, usually adorned with average-length fingernails, were shorn by her teeth so that pink flesh showed.

4 P.M.: Louise called the state headquarters of the Mississippi Summer Project at Jackson and reported the lack of contact with the three. Jackson called back immediately on the Wide Area Telephone Service (WATS line), which enables the state headquarters to call directly all over the state (cost, \$500 plus, monthly). Jackson confirmed the emergency procedures given and asked that Louise not begin them until 5 P.M., because the trio would have to walk for hours to get to a phone if there had been a mechanical failure of the car.

5 P.M.: Louise in Meridian and the WATS line operators in Jackson began calling methodically, one by one, every jail from Meridian to Philadelphia: Philadelphia city jail, Neshoba County jail, Decatur city jail, Suqualena city jail, Collinsville jail, Lauderdale County jail, Meridian city jail. The response was negative. No one knew anything about the three: "Ain't here." "That nigger and his nigger lover ain't here."

Just as methodically, hospitals along the same route were called. The result was also negative. Samuel Block was dispatched to make a personal inquiry at the Meridian jail.

6 P.M.: Jackson and Meridian began calling the FBI and State Highway Patrol, asking for help in finding the missing three. Both

agencies expressed indifference. Methodical checks began again of the jails and hospitals along the route.

7 P.M.: Charles Young, owner of the Young Hotel, made calls to people he knew in the Philadelphia area. No results.

8 P.M.: Meridian reported in to Jackson on efforts and lack of results.

9 P.M.: After making the same checks of hospitals and jails, Louise called Jackson. Jackson reported that the Atlanta office of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) had been alerted and had joined the pressuring of the Justice Department and the FBI to give some help at once.

9:05 P.M.: Cars full of white males circled the Meridian office.

9:06 P.M.: Meridian police called about the cars circling.

The phone log in Meridian indicates more checks of the hospitals and jails at 11 P.M. and 12 midnight and at 1 A.M. on June 22, 1964—all with negative results. As the hour grew later, calls were made to the nearest kin of the three missing persons, while both SNCC in Atlanta and the Jackson headquarters called, fought, and harassed the FBI, the Justice Department and the Mississippi State Highway Patrol to help find the missing trio. The response by these three law enforcement agencies was less than heartening. (The phone log of the Jackson headquarters for the Summer Project as it attempted to get help is set forth in the appendix.)

The first break occurred the following day, June 22, 1964, at 7:30 A.M., when Mrs. Herring, wife of the Neshoba County jailer, stated that the three boys had been arrested the day before, Sunday June 21, and released at 6 P.M. the same day, June 21.

Three days later, Thursday, June 25, 1964, the three were still *missing* (a status they would have for another 41 days) when I and several other volunteers went into Neshoba and talked with the people in the Longdale section who were the last friendly persons to see the trio alive.

To our chagrin, we learned that these persons had not yet been interviewed by the FBI. Our group waited at the sight of the burned-out Mt. Zion Methodist Church while Matteo S. Suarez, "Flukey," a CORE field secretary, conducted a private interview with a person whose identity has to be concealed. So hot and muggy was the

day that I contented myself to sit on one of the blackened cinder blocks from the foundation of the church. Three of the other fellows began an odd pursuit: they began tinkering around with the bell from the church.

For more than a half hour, while awaiting Flukey's return, they tinkered and failed, tinkered some more and failed some more, as they tried to assemble the bell on its iron cradle so that it could ring. Again and again the makeshift repair would fall apart as one rusty piece of wire would break or a screw would fall out of the hook that was supposed to hold the clapper.

Sam Block, SNCC field secretary, turned on a transistor radio just as news was coming forth: "We, the parents of the summer volunteers, demand that the President and the federal government protect those working in Mississippi to implement the ideals of our Constitution—and the people who live there the year round."

The announcer indicated that the lady speaking was Mrs. Marcia Rabinowitz.

"That's Joni's Mother," Sam screamed. Words can't describe the feeling that surged over us as the radio let us know that someone did care, that somebody was not blandly accepting the postulations of the federal government that our protection had to come from sheriffs like Lawrence Rainey. Almost simultaneously the fellows working on the bell got it together and began to ring it:

"Freedom! Freedom!" The shout rose between rings of the bell. We were swept up out of our fears and began to cry and shout: "Freedom! Freedom!" And louder: "Freedom!"

"Freedom!"

The bell clanged.

"Freedom—from all the sheriffs, governors and governments who would sacrifice us to prove the lies that make their truths," Sam Block shouted.

"Freedom!" The shout came again, and there was more clanging of the sweet tone of a bell that wasn't supposed to ring any more. The woods reverberated with excited and defiant shouts of men who were crying for Chaney, Mickey and Andy and for themselves men who, through no virtue of their own, had been spared.

Willie Blue, SNCC staff motion-picture cameraman, approached

Sam Block: "You know they're dead. Why did they have to kill 'em? Why did they have to kill 'em?"

If you lived in Mississippi, in Neshoba or some other county, there are several reasons—other than your own sick mind—why you might have felt it necessary to take your service .38 revolver and kill three young men involved in the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964.

A study of Neshoba County and its county seat, Philadelphia, suggests some of those reasons.

Neshoba is a virgin land with hundreds of thousands of acres of valuable pine-timber country, through which run more than 80 miles of the Pearl River, which can supply the water needed and the disposal system for hundreds of manufacturing plants that might be attracted to the area by tax-free land that the county might care to donate. It's located in a state that is dry—hard beverages are prohibited—and has adults, with a yearning for the forbidden liquor, who will pay \$5 for a pint of Four Roses whisky.

One of the important crops of the county is cotton, which is grown on strict allotment of acreages parceled out to farmers by a three-man white committee elected by the white farmers of the county—free of any interference from those farmers who are colored. It's a county where you can find thousands of able-bodied Negro males and females willing to work from "kin to kaint," as sunrise to sunset is colloquially described, for a mere \$3 a day or less.

As a resident of Neshoba County, you would proudly point to two very fine manufacturing plants, which are the largest employers in the county, U.S. Motor Division of Emerson Electric and Wells-Lamont Glove Factory—which either have or are trying to get contracts with the federal government—and to your proximity to the Naval Aviation Air Station nearby, which buys thousands of gallons of milk from your cows along with other food products. With pride you could point to the number of country residents who work at the Meridian Naval Air Station without fear of some Negro's successfully asserting that he ought to be entitled to a *white man's job*.

In describing the county, you would not forget such things as the rural and city postal system with star routes efficiently served because the personnel is white. As a Neshobian you could take comfort in the fact that there are only 10 Negro voters and that all of the white voters have long since learned that communism, integration, sex and sin are synonymous. No trouble would be had in reaching the conclusion that you are doing right well because you are better off than the Negro—your standard, as well as the enemy when he seeks to move out of the order of things.

More than a quarter of a million dollars in liquor is sold in the county annually at various joints and dives. The person who permits this continued operation can expect to be handsomely favored with appreciation. In addition to the legal liquor sold "illegally" (whisky made with the federal alcoholic tax paid on it), there is considerable moonshining.

Under the provisions of recent federal enactments, companies in Neshoba County such as Emerson's U.S. Motor Division, serving the government through contracts, cannot easily refuse to hire a Negro if he presses his case. By reason of location and wages, the local Negroes are the ones most likely to be attracted to the jobs; but, alone, few Negroes would venture such a step. However, with an organized community of Negroes, aided by civil rights workers, the story could be very different. Therefore, organization which could lead to integration is "bad."

The farm income of the county is closely related to the support programs of the federal government which allocate acreage to the white farmers through a three-man committee elected by the farmers of the county. Unlike political elections, to vote for this three-man county committee, one need be only a farmer or sharecropper. No literacy tests, poll taxes or what have you are required to vote. Pressure for integration would stir up the farmers and sharecroppers who are Negroes, and this convenient arrangement would be in trouble.

Regardless of whether you employed Negroes for \$3 or less per day, ran the cotton gin where you put the short weight on the Negro farmers in addition to commandeering the valuable cotton

seeds from the ginning, sold butane gas for the thousands of rural homes at excessive prices, or dealt in "illegal" liquor, integration in your mind would represent a threat.

In Neshoba County James Chaney, Mickey Schwerner and Andy Goodman would have represented that threat if you had become a part of things as they were—and this consideration was, and is, not limited to white people. In a showdown the Negro bootleggers, moonshiners and schoolteachers might find something within them tugging them to uncoil the rope or pull the trigger. In September, 1964, proof of this fact was offered when Negro Prof. Moore, principal of the Neshoba Negro High School, expelled 40 students for wearing SNCC "one-man, one-vote" buttons to school. Many of these students had attended the freedom school in Neshoba in July and August, 1964—the project that the burning of the Mt. Zion Methodist Church and the killing of the three civil rights workers was supposed to end.

The threat would have been heightened when the rights workers consistently involved themselves with those "Longdale niggers" who had a reputation for being "arrogant and independent."

The county citizens may never forget four years ago, when it was reported that 13 Longdale Negroes came into Philadelphia wearing their Sunday best to register to vote: neat suits and bright print dresses, shiny shoes—and polished shotguns.

Or June 22, 1964, 29 hours after the first call to the federal government for help, four of the nation's 6,140 FBI agents arrived in Philadelphia. On June 25, 1964, 100 sailors from the nearby Meridian Naval Air Station were involved; on June 27 the number was increased to 200 sailors and on June 29 to 400—for a search that was to last 44 days, until the three bodies were unearthed on an informer's tip.

The shock of the triple lynching festered itself into a double bitterness among the SNCC and CORE staff, who had dreaded this summer program even as they had prepared for its beginning. It became apparent that a phone call to the Neshoba jail by a federal agent before 9:30 P.M. could have done much to preserve the three lives.

Adams Bootleggers Forced To Retreat

Cross River To Louisiana, Insist Governor's Doing

NATCHEZ, Miss. (Special)—"We don't know why Gov. Johnson is shutting off liquor here," said a Natchez bootlegger, "We think he must be very ungrateful to previous contributions we have made to his campaigns while running."

In Natchez and throughout Adams County today bootleggers were taking inventory and moving stock across the Mississippi River bridge to Vidalia, La. Sale of all intoxicating liquor and gambling in Adams County was ordered ended by midnight tonight in a joint order from the sheriff and

chief of police. The governor's offices today claimed the governor issued no order for the Natchez shutdown but the bootlegger said, "When we were told we must close, we were told that the governor was definitely behind it. He must really be ungrateful."

A spokesman in the governor's office said today that the local authorities initiated the action "but as always the state stands ready to back up local authorities on any law enforcement where requested to do so."

The spokesman said the state

is willing to cooperate in any way as requested by local authorities.

Sheriff Odell Anders and Police Chief J. T. Robinson said the closedown came after Gov. Johnson told them by telephone if they did not close the places he would use the newly-enlarged highway patrol to close them.

The sheriff said the order included all clubs both public and private. The order also placed a midnight curfew on the sale of beer and wine. Both are legal in Adams County.

Liquor has been sold openly

in the county for many years and the city of Natchez has collected a black market tax on sales since 1946. The state also collects a black market tax on all liquor sales in the state.

Mayor John Nossier and Anders said the crackdown was designed to aid an investigation by the FBI and state officers into racial violence here. The Mississippi Highway Patrol has been under heavy criticism in the area for some of the methods used in its search for weapons.

It was reported that liquor sales in the county had been under "strict control" for several weeks and that liquor drinking was not being allowed in any of the bootleg establishments.

At least for a time, Adams County residents will be forced to drive all the way to Louisiana for their liquor—about five minutes from any part of Natchez.

The *Jackson (Miss.) Daily News*, Thursday, October 29, 1964, p. 10.

"We cannot protect. We can only investigate." Those are infamous phrases of the Mississippi summer that began in death on June 21, 1964.

The second aspect of the bitterness was the search. Rita Schwerner, Mickey's widow, stated it well: "We all know that this search with hundreds of sailors is because Andrew Goodman and my husband are white. If only Chaney was involved, nothing would've been done." Her lips spoke a deadly truth; the 80 SNCC and 20 CORE members who had been preparing for the coming of the summer volunteers knew it. Five Negroes are *known* to have been killed in Mississippi between January and May, 1964, with indifferent silence given to pleas for help.

The kind of white "troops" volunteering for the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964 made the difference—those northern students who were to staff freedom schools and community centers and to engage in voter registration. Preparations made in the spring of 1964 for the Summer Project had also helped make that difference.

II

COFO and the Summer Project

In my Father's house are many mansions:
if it were not so, I would have told you.
I go to prepare a place for you.
. . . that where I am, there ye may be also
And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

—St. John 14:2

IN NOVEMBER, 1963, Governor Ross Barnett and the other reigning lords of a private enclave called Mississippi had long since developed a loathing for chiggers, weevils and "Snickites." And in November, 1963, the SNCC personnel added a new cuss word to the racist vocabulary: "COFO."

COFO, or the Council of Federated Organizations, is a composite of the civil rights organizations functioning in Mississippi . . . SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and smaller groups, such as the Holmes County Voters League and the Ruleville citizenship organization.

At the formation of COFO it was expected that the expenses of the state's civil rights activities would be borne by direct grants from the national civil rights groups.* In keeping with the unity concept

*The name COFO goes back to the spring of 1961, when such persons as Medgar Evers, the slain NAACP field secretary; Aaron Henry; Carsie Hall, who is

for forming COFO, the officers elected for the organization reflected the broad membership. Dr. Aaron Henry (a Clarksdale druggist and president of the state NAACP) was elected president. Bob Moses (field secretary and Mississippi project director for SNCC) became COFO's program director. Dave Dennis (CORE field secretary) was elected the COFO assistant program director.

As beautiful as the idea of unity was, one cannot say that the idea ever succeeded or failed; from the beginning it wasn't tried. CORE said it could not participate unless it was given some special area of the state in which to work, so that it could get "projection" (image in news releases about Mississippi that would assist in CORE fund raising). As a result, agreement was reached to allow such emphasis by assigning to CORE the Fourth Mississippi Congressional District (counties which include the cities of Canton, Meridian and Philadelphia). Into this area CORE placed 20 field secretaries; it paid their salaries but, otherwise, made only minor contributions to the over-all budget of COFO.

Tension increased between CORE and COFO when, inadvertently or otherwise, the national office of CORE repeatedly issued news releases and made comments to the contributing public in the North that implied that CORE was *the* organization planning, directing and staffing the voter registration, civil rights activities and political education program of the entire state, to the detriment of the organization really pulling the financial load.

Similar claims were made by the NAACP's New York Office on occasions. In actuality the NAACP contributes neither staff nor money to COFO programs. The NAACP claims to be participating in the state through its direct contributions of money to the NAACP chapters of the state. Examination shows that these NAACP chapters are, for the most part, programmatically dead. The NAACP members desirous of activity find it outside of the "let's hold a

one of the state's three civil rights lawyers; and others formed the group in order to have a meeting with Governor Ross Barnett to secure the release of the Freedom Riders. It was felt that the Governor would not meet with older, established civil rights organizations. After the Barnett meeting, COFO became inactive. It was revitalized in January, 1962, by Bob Moses of SNCC, whose experience at that time had shown him that discrimination in Mississippi would yield only to a unified attack by as strong a force as possible.

meeting" postulating of the state chapters; they work with COFO. The NAACP "big gun" in Mississippi is Charles Evers, whose only apparent skill lies in having the same last name as his martyred brother, Medgar.

SCLC makes no claim regarding itself in Mississippi, contributes two staff persons to the COFO program and has made nominal financial contributions to the heavy financial burden of COFO's effort to create "The Beloved Community."

SNCC supplies the personnel in four of the five Congressional districts of the state, 95 per cent of the staff in the state headquarters in Jackson, and 90 to 95 per cent of the money for operating the civil rights program and facilities throughout the entire state.

Civil Rights in Mississippi is COFO.

SNCC for all practical purposes, is COFO.

And SNCC is people.

SNCC is in reality a 48-year-old Mississippi field secretary named Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, whose ample matronly frame dragged a long picking sack down thousands of rows of somebody else's cotton, snatching bolls, while she projected her deep powerful voice in the "Lord's songs," shaking the air to the outermost corners of the fields. One day she tried to register for the vote. Swiftly she became unemployable. She was shot at. On one occasion she was beaten until the drawing of a breath shot rivulets of pain throughout her.

SNCC is the gaunt frame of 25-year-old Jesse Harris, towering above the six-foot mark and crowned by a slender, high-checkboned face in burnished brown—and refusing to let the words "yes, sir" flow through his goateed lips to placate an angry Mississippi State Highway patrolman alarmed by a racially mixed car driving to the McComb Freedom House.

SNCC is Bob Moses, the 30-year-old director of SNCC's Mississippi Project, who arrived in the state in the fall of 1961—a date which the subsequent crowded, terror-filled, often foodless days have made seem a million years ago. Moses is a medium-built young man with a romantically alive tan face. Ever so slightly his hair is thinning at the front. His clothes are almost always casual.

Feverishly he drinks in the contents of books as if they were a

rare wine. Equally well he gulps in meaningful conversations that bear upon his interests. When he does speak, it's in a soft, low, languid voice laden with sincerity. But he doesn't speak often or at great length. Because of his relation to the Movement and the importance of his ideas, his silences have become a form of eloquence. In many ways Bob Moses is ascetic.

By virtue of his innate abilities and good fortune, he has obtained formal education at Hamilton College and Harvard University—advantages obtained in spite of his low-income Harlem background.

Moses was one of the prime authors of the idea of year-round day-to-day living among those whom you would purport to lead into advanced positions of protest in the civil rights effort. This approach was a major factor in establishing SNCC in Mississippi, because one of the biggest fears of Negro Mississippians was that "civil rights workers will come, stir up trouble and then leave."

Moses was one of the major guiding spirits of the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964—albeit a troubled one. He was, and is, troubled because of the constant decision-making that he must do—which has appended to each decision the specter of death. In Mississippi the innocent dispatching of a person on a five-mile journey can result in the ultimate.

And death has clung close to Bob on too many occasions. On February 28, 1963, just outside of Greenwood, Mississippi, Moses was riding in a car which was splattered with 14 bullets, 3 of which went into the upper part of the body of James Travis, who sat next to Moses on the front seat. By one of those mystiques of the Movement, Travis was not killed. But there were deaths. They occurred in McComb, Mississippi.

For years the McComb area has been infested with scores of white men with the unshakable belief that the pathway to sainthood while alive, and perhaps deification when dead, comes when one's aim is good, the squeeze of the trigger is steady and the target is a "nigger" or "nigger lover."

When Moses arrived in McComb in 1961, there were neither candles nor matches—nor hands that believed that the matches could

light the candles. In this environment Bob Moses and the first of the now 80 SNCC field secretaries began canvassing to get people to vote.

Finally one Negro, Herbert Lee, agreed to go down to register. This struck a match. The candle was lighted. And then it was snuffed out precipitously as the blood oozed through Lee's clothes and stickily clung to the blackness of his death-cold skin.

Louis Allen witnessed the killing of Lee by a Mississippi legislator, E. H. Hurst. The coroner's jury of the county termed the killing as being justified and in self-defense.

Bob Moses encouraged Allen to give the facts to the FBI, which he did.

Moses sought to get the FBI to protect Allen, which it didn't. After a series of harassments, arrests on trumped-up charges, beatings and surveillance, the misery ended for Louis Allen. Three days before Allen was to leave McComb—January 31, 1964—he was found dead with half of his face scattered several feet away from his head.

Events such as this shaped the thinking and concern that made a Freedom Summer in Mississippi in 1964 an extraordinary undertaking.

The event that probably concretized the idea of having thousands of summer volunteers in Mississippi was the Freedom Vote Campaign for Governor in 1963. In this mock election, COFO attempted to enroll all the Negroes of Mississippi in freedom registration books. After registration, a Freedom Vote was cast by the registrants. On the Freedom Ballot were the names of Paul Johnson (Democrat) and Rubel Phillips (Republican)—who were vying with each other for the title of the greatest "nigger hater"—and Aaron Henry of the Freedom Democratic Party. Henry received 70,000 votes to swamp his opposition in the freedom election.

Amidst the jubilation of the successful mock election, pause was taken to evaluate how the large freedom registration was attained. Much of the credit had to be given to the 100 volunteers who had come into the state for two weeks from Yale and Stanford

universities. It became apparent that the same job done by these volunteers in the freedom election working under the direction of the veteran staff could be done on a larger scale during the summer of 1964. An idea was impregnated in the minds of some of the SNCC staff members working with COFO.

But giving birth to the idea was not done without pain and travail.

In the week that followed the successful Freedom Vote Campaign for Governor, SNCC staff members in Mississippi met in Greenville, Mississippi, to answer this question: "Where do we go from here?"

On Friday, the first day, the staff meeting began with a discussion of the white man's role in the Movement. The interracial staff of SNCC approached the topic at first with caution, then with intensity.

In almost undisguised expressions of "black nationalism," four or five of the Negro SNCC staff members at first urged that the role of the white students be severely limited if they decided to ask thousands of northern white students to come and help roll the stone away from the tomb. The idea of restrictions based on race was immediately pounced upon.

Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer said: "If we're trying to break down segregation, we can't segregate ourselves." Bob Moses said that it was much more important that the "right type of persons be brought into Mississippi" and that for such an evaluation skin pigmentation was irrelevant.

Gradually, as thoughts and counterthoughts were exchanged, the SNCC staffers began reaching their consensus and ideas emerged: Mississippi and the Movement had to move away from the viewpoint that the struggle was "black versus white"; there was no better way to make that departure than to have more white people in Mississippi working alongside black people so that the articulation and thinking could become one of "rational people against irrational people."

Having wrestled with its own being until it came up with a blessing, as Jacob once had done with the angel, the SNCC staffers were able to get the leadership of COFO to reach a similar consensus.

The summer of 1964 was on.

The SNCC Mississippi and national staff began at once to work for the solution of major obstacles, such as securing a site for the basic training of the summer volunteers, recruiting volunteers, securing contingents of lawyers, getting federal protection, completing 10,008 administrative tasks, and finding \$200,000 or more to begin the project.

By May, 1964, with the gigantic Summer Project only weeks away, things were very good and very bad.

The National Council of Churches had agreed to provide a site for the basic training of the volunteers and to donate \$50,000 to a Delta Project in Mississippi.

Friends of SNCC groups and ex-SNCC staff members were screening thousands of applicants in northern cities and at major recruiting centers at Howard, Yale, Harvard, the University of Illinois, Oberlin College, the University of Oregon, Stanford University and the University of North Carolina.

The National Lawyers Guild Committee for Legal Assistance to the South (CLAS) and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., along with lesser legal groups, had pledged scores of lawyers for the Project.

SNCC had fund-raising drives at a number of colleges. (Yale, for example, was trying to raise \$15,000.) Appeals were being made to the Field, New World and Taconic Foundations, which had donated in the past.

In April and May, though, the "good" seemed to be smothered by the "bad."

The same news stories in national magazines and newspapers which were attracting hundreds of students as volunteers simultaneously signaled an unleashing of more of the police-state nature of Mississippi. Governor Paul Johnson had worked to unite the radicals, as well as those considered "moderates" by Mississippi standards, behind him. In March Johnson had asked for and received legislative approval of an increase in the number of State Highway patrolmen from 275 to 475. (In addition, legislation was passed which allowed the Highway patrolmen to make arrests within the limits of a city and to go into a city or county and act as policemen

without first getting a request from local officials. This legislation was passed reluctantly after assurance was had that the state police would not interfere with the lush "illegal" liquor hustle of the counties.)

Legislation was passed allowing counties and cities to borrow policemen from each other. One law provided for massive quarantine (house arrest) "where there is imminent danger to public safety"; another made it a felony to circulate material that encouraged boycotts; and another bill made it a crime to operate a school without the permission of the county clerk.

The Jackson *Daily News* and other news media had characterized the coming of the summer volunteers as an invasion. The city of Jackson, Mississippi, took this literally: the police force was expanded from 200 to 390; Mayor Allen Thompson bought 250 shotguns, and mounts for them were installed in squad cars and on motorcycles; three flat-bed trailer trucks were converted into paddy wagons; and a mammoth "Thompson tank" was secured—which had 12-gauge steel walls and bulletproof windows.

Jackson police began in May to arrest, without provocation, anyone seen on the streets who appeared to be connected with COFO. The SNCC field secretary serving as COFO's legal coordinator, Hunter Morey, had the "distinction" of being arrested three times in less than four hours. After leaving the police station for one arrest where he had put up bond, he was arrested again before he could go the few blocks between the police station and the COFO headquarters.

Twice within a three-day period the windows of the COFO headquarters were broken. On the second occasion Nedra Winan, SNCC field secretary from San Francisco, was hit in the head with the brick. Panic gripped the office personnel. It became difficult to concentrate on processing the applications, preparing curriculum materials, answering correspondence and performing the other administrative tasks needed to bring to fruition the Summer Project.

Three-fourths of the persons who were in the Jackson headquarters were Negro and white girls; most of them—ten—lived in the Freedom House located nine blocks from the office.

There was constant police surveillance from dusk until daybreak, including the shining of spotlights and the blaring noise of police radios turned to highest volume, interspersed with cynical laughs of the officers. The intent of Mississippi appeared to be to run the staff which was processing the applicants and preparing the materials for the summer out of the state.

The officials almost succeeded.

The girls became desperate for peace that would allow them to sleep. They became willing to do almost anything to buy that peace. One young lady proposed to buy the peace by "enforcing strict segregation"—only to be embarrassed when she realized what she'd proposed.

At the office the people were more likely to snap or snarl at each other rather than speak—and this was May, with the beginning of the Summer Project only days away.

The most damaging aspect of May was the poverty of the staff; SNCC workers had not received their subsistence-level salaries (\$10, minus 36 cents for Social Security) for three weeks. For a week, the ten girls living in the Freedom House had no toilet. The plumbing was stopped up. The plumber wanted \$5—\$5 more than anyone had. Food was a communal effort of chipping in to buy sardines, "because they have a lot of vitamins," and peanut butter and bread, "because it fills and sticks to your ribs." All this occurred in May, with the Mississippi Summer Project beginning in but a few days.

One would think that the pressures would have turned the staff preparing for the Summer Project into animals—jackals. But one would have found that they were still humans . . . if perchance one could have looked in on a meeting, one of the hundreds held in April and May of 1964 in the Jackson headquarters.

Headquarters on Lynch Street consists of a storefront in the 1000 block that was formerly used as a Negro radio station and has five rooms, of varying sizes, located behind boarded windows covered with dullish-blue drapes of thin, tired cotton.

The five rooms are lined with little stalls made of half-inch plywood attached to the many walls created by short partitions or formed by the building itself. All in all, the storefront is about 40

feet wide and 100 feet long with finger-smudged, foot-smudged, emerald-green walls in spots. In the connecting corridor, as one comes in, there are usually fresh boxes of clothing or books awaiting distribution throughout the state. The facility is always crowded, the floors have papers on them, ash trays are always overflowing, and things are cluttered from having too many bees in a small hive.

Though the hour is late, say 11 P.M., there is still the sound of business. The typewriters hammer out a dull and incessant pecking that provides background "music" for a serious discussion that filters from a table in the center of the large middle room. It's getting awfully late. The topic is the Summer Project which will bring thousands into Mississippi: all young, some black, some white . . . and most inexperienced.

The discussants are Mendy Samstein, soft-sell, dedicated, and a veteran of more unpleasantness crowded into the past nine months (arrests, jails, beatings, and even murders) than the average American is exposed to in a lifetime.

Next to Mendy is Nedra Winan of San Francisco, who will in a few days "celebrate" two weeks of Mississippi life. She puffs casually on a Marlboro cigarette and fits well into this pattern of life; she seemingly brought few illusions with her and a lot of political savvy from working with student groups in California.

Beside Nedra is Donna Moses. Her short brown-skinned frame is accentuated by well-developed arms and legs from more than average physical activity all her life—so much that her parents must have feared she would never stop being a tomboy. Her shoulders are slightly broad. Five months ago the charismatic symbol of the Movement in Mississippi, Bob Moses, married her. As befits the human qualities of the Movement at this stage, all pay a little more than ordinary attention to her waistline: the slightest bulge will be quickly interpreted as a new recruit for the "Freedom Army."

At the other end of the small, tan, cigarette-burned table is Margaret Burnham, who is soon to pass her second month in the state. She's from New York City. Margaret is catching it hard. Simultaneously she is learning to adjust to the South, to Mississippi and to the rigors of a "soldier's life." This is her first extended stay

in an earthly hell. Though she tries to conceal her apprehensions, she fails; she has her father's expressive eyes.

To Margaret Burnham's right is Betty Garman from SNCC's Atlanta office. Betty has savvy and confidence. Her comments flow freely interspersed with a "damn" or "hell!" As she rhythmically moves her bare legs, which are crossed at the knees and encased in strap sandals, she gesticulates with a green ball-point pen and explains the problems of money, transportation, orientation and logistics for moving 1,000 volunteers safely into and out of Mississippi during the summer of 1964. In spite of the fact that the Summer Project will cost nearly \$800,000 and even though there is not now even enough money for those at the discussion table to eat, the planning is positive. Crisis is new neither to her nor to SNCC. SNCC has lived for four years from one miracle to the next, and another miracle will happen. One can sense confidence in the coming of another miracle in Betty's handsome face, with eyes that are set back a little deeper than most people's. "What do you say is the absolute essential to running the freedom schools?" she asks Mendy Samstein.

"This is all new. Your ideas are as good as the next person's," Mendy replies.

For reasons unknown, the real old veteran of this gathering seems fresh, although she has gotten barely six hours' sleep in the last few days. Her face gleams. Her personality, like her face, is soft. Like the other girls, she wears no lipstick to accent her small oval mouth. Her ideas roll forth in a logical and systematic order. This is Penny Patch. Barely over 20 years old, she's a veteran of Southwest Georgia, Atlanta and other protest centers. For nearly three years she's been jabbing her body and intellect into the jaws of predicaments created by the power structure of a racist South. She has scars—some in her mind, others perhaps concealed by the black sweater and gaudy orangish-print dress she wears—from filthy jails and brutish policemen.

The next member of the conference around the small table is Margaret Cunningham. She does not talk; she just listens and gulps into her soul the new and strange words and ideas of the prepara-

tion for the summer that threatens not to begin. Relatively fresh from Chicago's West Side, she seems intent on learning everything that will help her do her tasks better and survive. Her natural beauty is enhanced by the plain, olive-green dress she wears and by her long brunette hair, parted down the middle, which frames a delicately molded face that silently communicates a love and kindness not expressible in words. She is the sort of girl you'd cast in the role of Mary in a play about the birth of Christ.

Also participating in the conference is Robert Weil, who defies the laws of Mississippi and nature by constantly rousting himself at full speed at least 16 hours of each day. Bob's the communications man for headquarters—a position he seems ideally suited for: he loves details and is happiest while typing, clipping, pasting excerpts from newspapers and generally providing anybody and everybody with little-known facts about Mississippi from files and folders concealed in hidden and out-of-the-way places. At this conference he now looks as he has always looked since arriving in Mississippi: bushy hair, denim pants, white shirt, horn-rimmed glasses and the shadow of a beard, which leaves no doubt that every inch of his five-foot-seven-inch, 155-pound being is totally dedicated to helping explode a crack in the iceberg of despotism.

And then there's John O'Neal. He's a story unto himself—slender and a thing of beauty in his manly blackness. His hands and face are expressive to the point of naturally becoming an extension of his voice and its modulated southern Illinois accent.

"At any rate, we should not limit ourselves to an academic program," John urges. "Freedom schools should be merged with the concepts of the community centers."

And on and on and on the conferees talk and plan for the coming of the troops for the Summer Project.

III

The Troops

Rendezvous with Life

Assign me restless souls with a sense of destiny
to be met at the disputed barricade
When Summer comes with rustling shade
And vultures' screeches fill the air.
Let us stand tall in spite of epithet, political taunt,
To forge a people who care.
We have a rendezvous with life.

—The Wisdom of Dawley

ON JUNE 15, 1964, the "luck of the Africans" held up. The miracle prayed for by Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, hoped for by Betty Garman and demanded by Jesse Morris (the get-it-done SNCC field secretary in the Jackson headquarters) occurred.

The Mississippi Summer Project began—though the combined moneys in the Jackson and Atlanta offices of SNCC didn't amount to \$500.

Gathered and gathering in Oxford, Ohio, at the Western College for Women on June 15, 1964, were the first 300 of the more than 800 volunteers to serve in the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964, along with a score of psychiatrists and psychologists, three lawyers, and almost all of the veteran Mississippi staff, known as the "jungle fighters."

Early in the year Mississippi's ruling clique had begun referring

to the Summer Project as the *invasion*. If the Summer Project was an invasion, then these young volunteers were the *troops* and this orientation session in the quiet little college town of 8,000 people was the basic training center or "boot camp."

From the applications and interviews, SNCC knew the group of green troops to be seriously motivated, emotionally stable individuals, intent on making social change and American history, as opposed to just reading about it. Many of the volunteers were from prominent and influential families in New York, Illinois, California and New Jersey—the 20- through 25-year-old children of psychiatrists, physicists, lawyers and physicians—and one was the son of a Congressman (W. Donlan Edwards, Dem., Calif.).

Most generalizations about the summer volunteers, beyond the fact of their dedication, would be inaccurate. It is doubtful that one could willfully arrange a more diverse assortment of racial, social, cultural and economic backgrounds.

One example was Stokely Carmichael, an ex-SNCC staff member who had withdrawn from the Movement to attend school at Howard University in Washington. To volunteer for the project, Stokely had to borrow a dime for a phone call to Mike Thelwell, director of the Washington SNCC office.

Stokely was born in Trinidad. He is proportioned well, with longer-than-average arms, which can encircle with ease a 100-gallon gasoline container, and a head whose roundness is easily seen because of Stokely's custom of wearing his hair cut close—close enough to reveal several scars presented to him in nonviolent demonstrations: his burning pearllike eyes had silently asserted "Kiss my black ass!" to a cop who was determined that not a whit of segregation would change. Stokely is the person sculptors would seek as a model for a statue of a Nubian god.

His spirit is characterized by a disciplined wildness: he would study around the clock for several days for exams—and then miss them because of impetuous participation in a racial protest in nearby Cambridge, Maryland. Freedom rides, sit-ins, stall-ins, rent strikes—you name it; Stokely Carmichael has done it. Protest is part of the fiber of his being.

Stokely was project director in the Greenwood, Mississippi, area during the summer of 1964. Though there was a great deal of harassment and jailing and some beating, he was tempted to cry only once. Shortly before the 1964 civil rights bill became the law of the land, Stokely found himself sternly pleading with a group of local Greenwood Negro students not to get involved in public accommodations testing. For the summer, SNCC had decided to forgo public accommodations testing in Mississippi. Stokely wept . . . inwardly.

In sharp contrast to the appearance of Stokely, the magnificent barbarian, was another summer volunteer, Mrs. Ruth Schine.

Mrs. Schine is a handsome, matronly New Yorker with stark black hair bobbed around the neckline. Her bearing is faintly military because of her erect posture and her sense of orderliness, which she is secure enough not to flaunt. Although she is in her forties and has a grown daughter, it seemed to be of little concern to either Ruth or her fellow summer volunteers, many of whom were half her age. What did give her status as a "curiosity" for a day or so was a rumor that she could type 125 words per minute and take shorthand at 180 words per minute as a result of years of experience as a legal secretary. The heat, tension, chaos, hurry and desperateness of the Summer Project bothered her little, if at all. She worked in the Jackson headquarters. Her only two demands were quickly met: first, that the trash and dust be swept up at least once a day to make way for new trash and dust; second, that whatever tired soul passed through Jackson in the wee hours of the morning and was unable to find lodging and stretched out on top of her desk in exhaustion be off that desk by 9:30 A.M.

Regrettably, more of the summer volunteers were not Negroes. The ratio of white to Negro among the volunteers was about five to one. Historians report that Lincoln was extremely reluctant to allow Negroes in the Union Army but that necessity forced a waiving of this opposition. In 1964, a hundred years later, in its summer army SNCC would have preferred a more proportional representation of Negroes. But the money wasn't available. "Support promised by important people and institutions didn't materialize," James

Forman, SNCC's executive secretary, said. President Johnson didn't want the Summer Project to happen, and his influence was felt widely in the circles of the foundations when SNCC's requests for subsidies were considered.

The fact of the matter is that one needed money to be a volunteer. A volunteer had to be able to forgo earning income during the summer, have at least a source of getting a \$500 bond when arrested, pay his transportation to the training session in Ohio and to Mississippi, pay his living and eating expenses in Mississippi, take care of medical and hospitalization bills if they arose, and pay his way back home at the summer's end.

How vastly different were the conditions under which this army would exist in Mississippi from the conditions for those who serve in the vaunted United States Peace Corps!

If, instead of volunteering for Mississippi, they had volunteered for Morocco, the United States would have provided all of this:

1. Subsidized studies for weeks of the language, history, geography, economy and traditions of the host country.
2. Draft deferment.
3. Food, clothing, shelter, incidental expenses and \$75 monthly deposited in a savings account.
4. Transportation to and from Morocco.
5. 45 days of vacation at \$7.50 a day.
6. Some \$10,000 in insurance.
7. Complete medical care, civil service credit and other benefits.
8. Protection of their lives.

All these benefits—and more—would have been received, because we Americans have concluded that the activities of the Peace Corps are "*activities in the national health, safety or interest.*"

The Mississippi summer volunteers were going to teach freedom schools, get people registered to vote, open community centers, organize the poor of both races and challenge racial segregation, and they would enter Mississippi with all the protection, concern and benefits that the veteran SNCC and CORE staff members have had for years . . .

Nothing!

If a summer volunteer had not already received a "Prospectus

for the Mississippi Freedom Summer" before his arrival at the orientation, he could get his copy there. This prospectus, by use of rhetorical questions, "told it like it is":

A program is planned for this summer which will involve the massive participation of Americans dedicated to the elimination of racial oppression. Scores of college students, law students, medical students, teachers, professors, ministers, technicians, folk artists and lawyers from all over the country have already volunteered to work in Mississippi this summer—and hundreds more are being recruited.

Why a project of this size?

1. Projects of the size of those of the last three summers (100 to 150 workers) are rendered ineffective quickly by police threats and detention of members.
2. Previous projects have gotten no national publicity on the crucial issue of voting rights and, hence, have little national support either from public opinion or from the federal government. A large number of students from the North making the necessary sacrifices to go South would make abundantly clear to the government and the public that this is not a situation which can be ignored any longer, and would project an image of cooperation between Northern and white people and Southern Negro people to the nation which will reduce fears of an impending race war.
3. Because of the lack of numbers in the past, all workers in Mississippi have had to devote themselves to voter registration, leaving no manpower for stopgap community education projects which can reduce illiteracy as well as raise the level of education of Negroes. Both of these activities are, naturally, essential to the project's emphasis on voting.
4. Bail money cannot be provided for jailed workers; hence, a large number of people going South would prevent the project from being halted in its initial stages by immediate arrests. Indeed, what will probably happen in some communities is the filling of jails with civil rights workers to overflowing, forcing the community to realize that it cannot dispense with the problem of Negroes' attempting to register simply by jailing "outsiders."

Authorship of the prospectus was not credited on the document, but there was the unmistakable ring in the writing of the vocal

cadence and logical sequences so characteristic of the SNCC director of the Mississippi Project, Bob Moses.

The other important question raised and answered by the prospectus was *Why this summer?*

Mississippi at this juncture in the movement has received too little attention—that is, attention to what the state's attitude really is—and has presented COFO with a major policy decision. Either the civil rights struggle has to continue, as it has for the past few years, with small projects in selected communities with no real progress on any fronts, or there must be a task force of such a size as to force either the state and the municipal governments to change their social and legal structures, or the federal government to intervene on behalf of the constitutional rights of its citizens.

Since 1964 is an election year, the clear-cut issue of voting rights should be brought out in the open. Many SNCC and CORE workers in Mississippi hold the view that Negroes will never vote in large numbers until federal marshals intervene. At any rate, many Americans must be made to realize that the voting rights they so often take for granted involve considerable risks for Negroes in the South. In the larger context of the national civil rights movement, enough progress has been made during the last year that there can be no turning back. *Major victories in Mississippi, recognized as the stronghold of racial intolerance in the South, would speed immeasurably the breaking down of legal and social discrimination in both North and South.* (Emphasis supplied.)

The project is seen as a response to the Washington March and an attempt to assure that in the Presidential election year of 1964 all American citizens are given the franchise. The people at work on the project are neither working at odds with the federal government nor at war with the State of Mississippi. The impetus is *not against* Mississippi, but for the right to vote, the ability to read, the aspirations and the training to work.

The orientation meetings were staggered with an average of more than 250 volunteers at each of the one-week sessions. I attended the first one.

The week was crowded. In charge of the training was a cadre of 80 Mississippi veterans, who had the task of making Freedom Fighters out of the eager, naïve and frightened students from the bowels of suburbia and some of the best schools in the country:

Howard, Yale, Cornell, Harvard, Princeton, Bryn Mawr, Skidmore, Antioch.

The veterans pushed, pulled, prodded, lectured, questioned and studied the new recruits. The volunteers were photographed, catalogued, assigned, tested and given forms to fill out. The long schedule of the day was divided between sectional meetings (more than 20 of them, geographically designated) and general assemblies in one of the small auditoriums of the women's college. There instructions were given in how to protect vital organs when attacked, answer questions when arrested and develop friendly relations when greeted by a suspicious Negro community. The volunteers were subjected to a cram course in the ways of life—and death—in Mississippi. When the volunteers arrived in Oxford, Ohio, they were merely scared. Before they left, they were terrified. Speakers informed the volunteers: "There's not even a sharp line between living and dying; it is just a thin fuzz."

Within six days the volunteers must have heard 600 statements of warning similar to the one made by Jim Forman: "I may be killed and you may be killed."

The volunteers were informed at every possible turn that they had no rights worth mentioning. Particularly vivid were the instructions of R. Jess Brown, a practical lawyer from Jackson, Mississippi, and one of the only four Mississippi attorneys who will accept civil rights cases. Pointing a slender finger like a sword, Brown said: "If you're riding down somewhere and a cop stops you and starts to put you under arrest even though you haven't committed any crime—go on to jail. Mississippi is not the place to start conducting Constitutional law classes for policemen, many of whom don't have a fifth-grade education."

The remarks were greeted with laughter, the kind one blurts out when the real reaction is to cry. Jess Brown had related the instructions with a smile on his face and presented the remarks in a light vein, but the message got across.

On a few occasions the volunteers found themselves being rebuffed by the veterans who walked out of an assembly. The volunteers had chuckled at a film on voter canvassing when the aged

Negro spoke in a dialect that most of the volunteers had heard only over the "Amos and Andy" program. No matter. These petty conflicts—inevitable whenever green troops join battle-tested veterans—were soon forgotten.

For the volunteers, the most crushing experience was the assembly meeting with John Doar, representative of the Department of Justice of the United States of America.

Doar spoke for 15 minutes, reading a prepared statement setting forth the accomplishments of the Kennedy-Johnson administration that made nothing seem everything: where no voting case had been filed in a certain state in 100 years, the Kennedy-Johnson administration had filed one, making for a 100 per cent increase. Casually Doar mentioned the absence of legislation to enable the federal government to protect anyone, added that the FBI was *only* an investigative agency, and opened the floor to questions.

A spectacled, overalled Negro screamed at Doar: "What are you going to do to enable us to see the fall?"

The room was hushed.

Matter-of-factly, Doar replied, "Nothing. There is no federal police force. The responsibility for protection is that of the local police. We can only investigate."

Bedlam broke loose.

Questions were hurtled in anger and fright from all corners of the large assembly room. Invectives and even denunciations came forth. Nobody was angry with Doar—the man. In this situation he was more than a man; he was the symbol of the United States government and all the fine things that the volunteers believed about the federal government and its ability and willingness to protect the lives of citizens. The blow was cruel.

For a week the volunteers had been taught to view Mississippians—in and out of police uniforms—as the persons ready, willing and able to find a warm spot for a "nigger lover" on the cool bottom of the Pearl River.

Now there was nothing.

Later, in the privacy of rooms, many cried unashamedly. There

were reappraisals by all as they asked themselves: "What is there in Mississippi that I'm willing to die for?"

"We can only investigate. We can only investigate!"

Even the veterans were edgy. Supper was served in a large modern cafeteria with a circular opening in the middle which opened to a floor below, where there was a recreational area. Ostensibly it was a time for eating; in fact, it became a theater, where each person performed within himself for his captive audience of one. Some told each other joke after joke, and their continuous laughter scattered across the dining hall, where others talked about nothing and everything just so long as they didn't have to think about the helplessness in the horror to the South. Others merely brooded: "The government can 'only investigate!'"

Departure was to take place on Saturday morning, June 20, 1964. On the night of Friday, June 19, a soul-singing session began shortly after supper was over. Leading it was Matthew Jones of the SNCC Freedom Singers. Everyone was intense. Pete Smollett from New York, on hand for a final session with several of the SNCC field secretaries trained in his studio in the use of motion-picture cameras, knew the score and "told it like it was." He saw the fear: "It hangs in this air like a stale blanket."

Song after song poured into the moonlit night. Old verses were remembered; new verses were created. They sang of triumphs, of defeats, of fallen martyrs and rising heroes. They sang of jails, of picket lines. While groups with arms across each other's shoulders in the wide circle tried to remember a song that hadn't already been sung, there were just hums and moans like those found in little country churches. But the dawn, which they tried to stop with the anguish of their hearts transposed into the wails of their vocal cords, came anyway. Saturday, June 20, 1964, was a bright sunny day. Everything was perfect about the weather from Oxford, Ohio, to Biloxi, Mississippi, on the Gulf Coast and from Natchez, Mississippi, on the river to Meridian near the Alabama-Mississippi line.

A handful went north. We could only be amazed that there weren't more.

The rest headed south to the smell of magnolias and fetid

swamp waters—James Chaney, Charles Cobb, Mickey Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, Mary Lovelace, Ruth Schine, Stokely Carmichael and all the others.

The summer had begun.

For Mississippi, the South and the nation, this invasion by this strangely concocted army was the most devastating assault on things as they are since Sherman's march to the sea. It opened the eyes of a lot of smug people—within and without the Movement.

There were many of us since 1960 who had chauvinistically concluded that courage was a black monopoly, though a few had ever articulated the idea. There were the few exceptions like Robert Zellner, Zev Avelony and Mickey Schwerner; but these were exceptions that proved the rule.

It appeared that the black college student came closest to fulfilling the role of catalyst for meaningful social reform (and sometimes revolution) that is played by students in Africa, Europe, Asia and Latin America. The best that the "infantile" minds of the white college students could conceive of appeared to be "panty raids," beer-can stacking and telephone-booth packing. The white college student had such a stake in "things as they are" in American suburbia that in his whiteness he couldn't afford to become concerned about the sickness; so he merely added to it. Things had to be played safe—so much so that even if he were standing in a torrential downpour he couldn't afford to say that "it's raining" unless he could first check the pages of a soaked *New York Times*.

These troops had proven these fantasies to be lies. They had pressed onward to Mississippi in the face of deliberate and repeated intimidation from those whom they trusted, the Mississippi veterans, who had said as cruelly as they could, "If you go, you can die." The troops went because they had to.

They went for the same reasons that Bob Moses had gone to McComb, Mississippi, in 1961; for the same reasons that Charley Cobb, Jesse Morris and Stokely Carmichael went; and for the same reasons that brought the Rev. Edwin King (a white Methodist minister) and his wife Jeanette back to Mississippi to fight the thing they had almost decided to run away from.

LSU FEVER RUNS HIGH

Ole Miss Panty Raid Turns Into Rioting; Five Arrested

UNIVERSITY, Miss. (Special) — At least five Ole Miss students were arrested early this morning after a mass panty raid erupted into violence.

Officers said about a dozen students' identification cards were confiscated and more arrests were likely.

One student was treated for minor injuries at the student infirmary and at least one was reported treated for facial injuries at Oxford-Lafayette Hospital. There were no serious injuries reported.

Violence broke out on the campus several hours after an organized bonfire rally for the Ole Miss-LSU football game. Male students milled near Kincaid dormitory about 11:30 Thursday night and by midnight the crowd numbered several hundred.

There had been rumors of the panty raid for several days.

The crowd went to Deaton and Somerville, girls dorms, but the group dwindled to about 200 students when violence erupted. Both dormitories were reported damaged, windows smashed and some students broke into the dormitories but no rooms were entered.

The car belonging to Campus

Police Chief Burns Tatum was rolled down a hill and crashed into a fire plug. Windows of the car were broken and the upholstery torn.

As Sheriff Boyce Bratton drove into the mob his car windows were smashed by flying rocks. One campus policeman was injured when hit on the head by a rock.

Dean Frank Moak, dean of students, said he heard rumors of a panty raid earlier Thursday evening and went to the campus.

At about 11:30 all girls dormitories began usual panty raid safely preparations — all lights were turned out, doors to rooms were locked, elevators were taken to the top floors, and residents were told to stay away from windows.

Throughout the raid Ole Miss Chancellor J. D. Williams stood guard near LaBauve Dormitory

which houses the two Ole Miss Negro students. A university spokesman said the two were not involved in the demonstration in anyway.

At one time during the raid a student shouted, "Let's get the Negroes."

"No, we want panties," the crowd shouted back.

An anonymous letter appearing Thursday in the student newspaper, *The Mississippian*, called for a spontaneous pep rally "minus the cheer leaders and the Associated Student Body."

"Here it is the week of the LSU game; while the LSU campus is rocked by demonstrations, the students at Ole Miss are sitting quietly on their hands. Whatever happened to the famous Ole Miss spirit?" the letter asked.

The writer said he was not advocating mob violence "but how about a little enthusiasm."

Last night Ole Miss students got off their hands, on to their feet, and for a few, no doubt, out of school.

The letter was answered affirmatively.

The *Jackson (Miss.) Daily News*, Friday, October 30, 1964.

The compulsion which projected these students into the midst of Mississippi is not strange or foreign to the South or America; it is woven into the fabric of our history. It is no different from the experience of the South when large numbers of able-bodied men from the northern hills of Alabama risked their lives to go through the Confederate lines to join the Union Army when the South tried to overthrow our government with force and violence. And there were countless examples even before that—at the founding of our country, for example. What student of American history is not familiar with the name of the French general, Marquis de Lafayette, who aided so nobly in the winning of the first American Revolution as a soldier in the Continental Army? And Lafayette was rewarded by American support of the French Revolution which occurred a few years afterward.

IV

The Courts: Federal Law in Mississippi

Uncle tarnished the image respected
of a man always fair,
though sometimes right—
and other times wrong.

He gutted the strings of my harp,
On which I played Compassion
And Freedom Songs.

My eyes no longer look to the Hill:
From which no strength comes.
Now I only feel the sinew
Of the Freedom Fighter's arms.

—The Wisdom of Dawley

It's POETIC TRUTH that a lot of things in this life aren't what they seem to be.

Bloodhounds are an example.

Most people consider them to be merely soulful-looking hounds, low-slung, with long ears, friendly, and possessed of an acute sense of smell that makes them excellent for finding things—people. Prisoners at the Mississippi penitentiary view this supposedly kind old dog differently. The Mississippi prison system is a vast complex

of force and dehumanization designed to make the most out of a huge supply of prison labor. There are roads to be built, ditches to be drained and cotton to be hoed and picked. (The largest cotton subsidy in the United States is paid to the Mississippi prison system, which owns and operates the nation's largest cotton-acreage allotment.)

Much of the work of the prisoners during the day requires that they be outside of the walls and barbed-wire fences of their night-time confinement. The authorities know that one of the compulsive thoughts of every "forced guest" is to leave—by escaping or otherwise.

To discourage escape, new prisoners are "entertained" with a demonstration that causes a "second look": the yapping, yowling dogs straining at the leashes are released within a confine where there is a dummy dressed in prison attire. The prisoners watch in horror, while the powerful dogs rip away with their teeth at the arca on the dummy where the sexual organs would be if the dummy were human. The dogs are trained to find and castrate.

Just as the prisoners re-evaluate and take a second look at the bloodhounds, the Mississippi Summer Project suggests that the federal government should be looked at a second time and re-evaluated.

A prevalent concept is to consider our nation to be a country with 50 state governments and one large federal government with its own separate and distinct character.

This premise and oversimplification—of necessity—is not as true as it once *may* have been. At many points the federal government and the state governments, though not one and the same, become an alloy, so fused with each other as to deny *meaningful* distinction.

In other words, there is the Mississippi federal government, the New York federal government, the California federal government, and so on, for each of the several states of the United States. When the question "*What are you going to do to enable us to see the fall?*" was asked of John Doar of the Justice Department in Oxford, Ohio, at the orientation program for the summer volunteers, it was a request for the employment of federal protection. If the request had

been granted, it would have meant the employment of federal judges, federal juries and federal policemen.*

How does *federal* law enforcement differ from Mississippi law enforcement—in Mississippi?

Federal Judges

A person engaged in the Mississippi Summer Project in 1964 didn't have to take a plane to Washington, D.C., to see the federal government. To see it, he had only to go to the nearest federal court and look into the face of the federal judge. In Jackson, Mississippi, this would have involved going to the Post Office Building on Capital Street and catching an elevator to the upper floors. Not knowing where the courtroom was located, he might have stopped in the clerk's office for the United States District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi. Or he could have gone into the office of the United States Marshal or the United States District Attorney.

The clerk's office, marshal's office and United States District Attorney's office would have presented a "sea of white faces" which would have given directions to the courtroom with varying degrees of hostility. The counterparts of these offices in the local state courts of Hinds County would have appeared no different—all white.

Upon entering the courtroom presided over by the Hon. W. Harold Cox (a schoolmate of Senator James O. Eastland), the visitor's eyes would have been sullied by a large (15-by-30-foot) mural above the judge's bench. Gazing from left to right, the visitor would have seen the slaves picking cotton and getting their bags weighed by a white overseer. Next he would have seen in the mural a tall white man with a broad-brimmed hat with his right arm in front of a white woman holding a baby while a girl with blond hair, appearing to be about 10 years of age, stands nearby. With his left hand the tall white planter helps an aged white woman—

* In spite of repeated begging and demands for the United States Civil Rights Commission to come with its subpoena powers and conduct hearings, for five years the Commission was kept out of the state.

in black with shoulders stooped—maintain her delicate stance. And then there is an equally tall white minister looking learned and holding the “holy book.” To the minister’s left is a collection of young white men reading blueprints and constructing a building which contrasts sharply with the shabbiness of the slave shack at the opposite side of the painting.

Underneath the mural would sit Judge Cox.

Judge Cox and the two other judges who comprise the federal judiciary of Mississippi interpret the Constitution and laws of the United States. Unless and until their decisions are appealed to a higher court, their decisions *are* the “Constitution.” Unless and until their acts are appealed, they *are* the federal government.

Their decisions are as predictable and consistent as the decisions of their counterparts in the state courts of Mississippi. Their decisions are so predictable that it is an accident or miracle when a person who files a case in the court pertaining to civil rights doesn’t have to appeal. The results would be no different in a Mississippi state court. In other words, the federal courts of Mississippi are just as *good* as the state courts of Mississippi.

One can understand why things are so similar if he considers an ancient definition of a judge: “A judge is a lawyer with political friends.” To become either a state judge or a federal judge in Mississippi (or any other state), one must have friends in politics.

To become a judge in Mississippi, one must be a friend of persons like Senator James O. Eastland, the White Citizens Council and ex-Governor Ross Barnett.

Civil rights cases in the federal courts are characterized by delay and frustration—and sometimes *honest* statements of their opinions by the federal judges. In one voting suit, on March 8, 1964, the Hon. W. Harold Cox was quoted as saying: “I am not interested in whether the registrar is going to give a registration test to a bunch of niggers on a voter drive.”

Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, who had concurred in the appointment of Judge Cox (the first Kennedy appointee) to the federal bench by his brother, President Kennedy, was asked by a reporter why persons known to have such strong segregationist

views had been selected. The Attorney General replied: “I’m very proud of the judges that have been appointed.”

During the successful campaign of Robert Kennedy for the election to the United States Senate from New York, his opponent, Senator Kenneth Keating, made much of the matter. This was unfair. Whether the administration of the federal government had been in the hands of the Democrats or the Republicans, in Mississippi the results would have been the same—as the appointment of the late Judge Ben Cameron of Mississippi to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit proved. When a federal judge who does not properly reflect the mores of the local political structure gets appointed by some accident or clever concealment, his life becomes miserable. Judges Waite Warring of South Carolina and Skelly Wright of Louisiana are examples of why the federal courts are a reflection of the political attitude of the states in which they preside—or else. These judges were hounded out of the South because of decisions favoring integration.

The State of Mississippi, the church-burning capital of the world, did not like its citizens to testify about the denial of civil rights and passed a state law making it a Mississippi offense for a person to give false information to any federal officer or agency, the definition of false being anything that Mississippi didn’t like. Using his judicial power, Judge Cox embarked on a similar venture in the federal courts. In October, 1964, Judge Cox cited in contempt Robert Hauberg, the United States District Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi, for refusing to sign an indictment for perjury against persons who had testified that there was racial discrimination against Negroes in a suit regarding the denial of the right to vote.

The U.S. District Attorney, himself in complete agreement with Judge Cox, tearfully declined because the Acting Attorney General of the United States, Nicholas Katzenbach, had ordered no signing. (Under the rules governing the federal courts, an indictment handed down by a grand jury is not effective until signed by the United States Attorney for the federal district in which the grand jury is convened.) On appeal of the contempt to the U.S. Court of Ap-

peals for the Fifth Circuit, Judge Cox was represented by Mississippi's Attorney General, Joe Patterson.

Mississippi doesn't want its Negro citizens—or any other citizens—bringing suits to stop, change, alter or correct illegal practices that are a denial of Constitutional rights. This control is maintained in part by the fact that there are only four lawyers (including R. Jess Brown, Carsie Hall and Jack Young) in the entire state who will handle racially controversial cases. The federal judges in Mississippi voiced approval of the Mississippi desire by issuing rulings to bar the many out-of-state attorneys servicing the Mississippi Freedom Summer from the federal courts unless and until they could get local Mississippi lawyers involved in each case.

This was a critical matter because of the physical impossibility of the willing Mississippi lawyers' being all over the state. There were more than 1,000 arrests by Mississippi policemen during the Summer Project, and practically all of these arrests were removed by filing a petition to the federal courts. Judge Cox insisted at once that each petition for removal be for only one person and that each petition be accompanied by a \$500 cost bond.

Through an appeal of the case of *Michael Lefton v. City of Hattiesburg* in mid-April, 1964, to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, these Judge Cox requirements were flushed away.

In summation, with regard to the federal judiciary one finds that if the state has racial segregation as a policy, the federal judges—who are judges solely because they have racist political friends—reflect, endorse and implement that policy, just as the state courts do. Because the things that exist in Mississippi exist in a raw and ugly form, they are easily detected and analyzed. But the same guidelines and results are true of the other 49 states. Yes, there will be distinctions between the federal and state courts; but those distinctions are without meaningful differences.

Judges are but one part of the federal government and federal law enforcement. Another important part of the federal law enforcement is the juries—that collection of persons which decides whether to indict or not to indict, which decides on innocence or guilt, which

decides the property rights or lack of them for the citizens in a state where a federal court is sitting.

This problem of juries in Mississippi and the South could and should be avoided by the following statute:

U.S. Code, Section 332, Title 10

Use of militia and armed forces to enforce federal authority.

Whenever the President considers that unlawful obstructions, combinations, or assemblages, or rebellion against the authority of the United States, *make it impracticable to enforce the laws* of the United States in any State or Territory *by the ordinary* course of judicial proceedings, he may call into Federal service such as the militia of any State, and use such of the armed forces, as he considers necessary to enforce those laws or to suppress the rebellion. (Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 15.) (Emphasis added.)

Federal Juries

The federal juries in each of the 50 states are expressions of the federal government—and replicas of the juries found in each of the state's court systems.

Mississippi is no exception.

SNCC made many efforts to secure "federal protection" for those who were going to be engaged in the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964. One such effort was a hearing before a special panel held on June 8, 1964, at the National Theater in Washington, D.C. Persons from Mississippi testified about violence in the state—including, among others, Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer (philosopher from the cotton fields of Ruleville), George Greene (SNCC field secretary and racing driver) and Hartman Turnbow (Tchula farmer whose Remington automatic rifle was called upon to speak a truth). In addition to the oral testimony, there was also the introduction of pertinent documents, all of which appeared in the Congressional Records of June 15, 1964, and June 16, 1964.

William Higgs, white ex-Mississippi lawyer, provided the hearing with a legal memorandum setting forth the various acts of Congress

under which the federal government could act to protect the lives of citizens before a lynching. (See last section of this chapter.)

Larry Speiser of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) spoke with regard to an exchange of letters between his office and that of Burke Marshall, Assistant Attorney General of the United States and head of the Civil Rights Division. Speiser had asked for more federal prosecutions of those officials of a state who deprive a citizen of his Constitutional rights. Such prosecutions are permissible under Title 18, United States Code, Section 242:

Deprivation of rights under color of law.

Whoever, under color of any law, statute, ordinance, regulation, or custom, willfully subjects any inhabitant of any State, Territory, or District to the deprivation of any rights, privileges, or immunities secured or protected by the Constitution or laws of the United States, or to different punishments, pains, or penalties, on account of such inhabitant being an alien, or by reason of his color, or race, than are prescribed for the punishment of citizens, shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than one year, or both. (June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 696.)

Quoting in part from Burke Marshall's letter of reply, Speiser said this:

He [Burke Marshall] said, "It is not true, as you suggest, that there have been few if any prosecutions under section 242 in recent years. For the same period as mentioned above, *eight* cases involving police or prison brutality were presented to Federal grand juries sitting in the State of Mississippi."

The period he [Burke Marshall] is referring to was between January, 1962, to February 28, 1963—14 months—in which there had been a total of 102 complaints filed alleging deprivation of civil rights in the State of Mississippi and they were received and investigated.

Now, of those 102 complaints, they presented *eight* cases to the Federal grand jury sitting in the State of Mississippi. On *six* of them the grand juries refused to return indictments. Of the two cases in which indictments were returned, one went to trial, defendant was acquitted by the verdict of the jury.

"The trial of the remaining case was expected to take place in the near future." This was back in March of 1963.

"I think you will agree this reflects a vigorous enforcement policy on the part of this department."

In his letter, Mr. Marshall indicated one reason for not filing more charges against State and local officials, he said. "But I will not permit the filing of a criminal information where I am not convinced *evidence will support a conviction* and sustain the judgment on appeal . . ." (Emphasis supplied.)

The remarks of the Assistant Attorney General, as reported by Speiser, were most revealing.

"Evidence that will support a conviction" is evidence that proves to the satisfaction of a jury beyond a reasonable doubt that a crime has been committed and that the particular defendant before the jury committed that crime.

This is remarkable for two reasons.

First, this level of proof is *not* required in any other federal prosecutions, tax frauds, narcotics, thefts of government property and what have you. It is a uniquely high level of proof. In all other areas, the Justice Department prosecutes if it has a *prima facie* case, a case in which there are the bare facts of the commission of a crime. "Reasonable doubt" suggests an almost absolute certainty that the person charged with the crime is guilty.

The second reason goes to the nature of the jury before which these matters are brought. White, southern juries can't quite believe that a civil rights worker—a Negro—can have a crime committed against him. The FBI report for the fiscal year of 1964 substantiates this conclusion. The report states that the FBI handled 3,340 civil rights cases during the year with only 5 convictions.

The circle of logic used by the federal government to neglect its duty to protect citizens shows that the federal government is either dumb or dishonest. If the federal juries were constitutionally proper, there would be a big difference in the statistics. To prove either this dumbness or dishonesty, one has but to look at Neshoba County, Mississippi, the county where the city of Philadelphia is located and where James Chaney, Mickey Schwerner and Andrew Goodman were killed.

Under the Constitution and laws of the United States, almost without exception, one is entitled to be tried for the commission of a crime in the locality in which the crime is supposed to have occurred.

All of the facts known about the lynching of the three civil rights workers show that the act of lynching occurred in Neshoba County. Neshoba County is located in the federal judicial area of Mississippi known as the Eastern Division of the Southern District of Mississippi. In addition to Neshoba, there are seven other Mississippi counties which comprise this judicial area: Clarke, Jasper, Lauderdale, Noxubee, Kemper, Newton, and Wayne.

The jury for one charged with committing a federal crime in this area should come from these counties. By clearly established law of long enunciation, juries have to be representative of the general population in the areas where the juries are drawn. In other words, if there is a certain area from which a jury is drawn that has a general adult population composed of 33 per cent Negroes, 22 per cent Mexican-Americans, 15 per cent Chinese-Americans, and 30 per cent whites, the jury roll of 1,000 names should come close to reflecting the same percentages. Any gross discrepancy in the proportional representation on that over-all jury panel, if not properly explained—and this is very hard to do—renders any and all indictments of the grand jury (the jury that decides whether to indict persons for alleged crimes) selected from the panel void, illegal and invalid. It also renders any and all verdicts of guilty by a petit jury (a jury that sits on the trial of a case and decides guilt or liability) void, illegal and invalid.

In the 8-county area in which Neshoba is located, the census shows that there are 103,472 persons 21 years of age or over. Racially this number is divided into 68,353 whites and 35,119 Negroes (33.9 per cent).

Yet the federal grand jury summoned in Mississippi in September, 1964, to hear the evidence in which indictments were gotten against Sheriff Lawrence Rainey, Deputy Sheriff Cecil Price and several others on the alleged charges of beating and intimidating and coercing Negroes and depriving them of their rights had only one Negro member out of the 33 persons called (23 regulars and 10 alternates).

Unofficial reports indicate that the failure of this grand jury to hand down indictments in September, 1964, against certain persons

for the lynching of the three civil rights workers was by a margin of one vote; 12 of 23 votes are needed for an indictment.

This one Negro in 33 jurors is not an oddity. A check of the records in the office of the U.S. Clerk in Meridian, Mississippi (the place where the federal district court of the area is located), revealed that in September, 1964, a panel of 50 persons was called to try cases and only 2 Negroes were on that panel. And this is from counties where the adult Negro population comprises 33.9 per cent of the total adult population.

Needless to say, the federal juries in Mississippi are exactly alike and just as *good* as the state court juries. They are so *good* that a New York lawyer, Arthur Kinoy, asserts the obvious: "There isn't a criminal conviction in Mississippi that could stand up if the jury question of representation is raised."*

By no means is the invalid jury system described peculiar to Mississippi. Albany, Georgia, where the political forces of the community successfully threatened noncooperation with the Kennedy Administration unless it brought criminal actions against the integration leaders of the community, provides another example. On flimsy evidence, which in no way dulled the stench of persecution, the Justice Department (our guardian of civil rights) indicted and convicted nine persons in the community who had been active in pushing the once-world-famous Movement for civil rights.

One of the victims of the upside-down "justice" was Miss Joni Rabinowitz, a SNCC volunteer in Albany during 1963.† In the brief before the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit is found the Mississippi-like information:

Rabinowitz v. U.S., No. 21256: The master jury box from which both the grand and petit juries were chosen contained 1,985 names. Of these, 117, or 5.8%, were Negroes. By contrast the Macon Division of the Middle District of Georgia has a population of 211,306 persons over the age of 21, of whom 73,014, 34.55%, were Negroes.

* Mel Wulf of the American Civil Liberties Union recently filed a suit in the Mississippi Federal Court to force the federal court to stop excluding Negroes from juries.

† An excellent pamphlet discussing the Albany cases is *Upside Down Justice* by the Southern Conference Education Fund, 4403 Virginia Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky.

Luckily for the Southern judicial system, the federal government has not seen fit to take note of the following statute in any active manner in Mississippi or elsewhere.

Section 243, Title 18, U.S. Code. *Exclusion of jurors on account of race or color.*

No citizen possessing all other qualifications which are or may be prescribed by law shall be disqualified for service as grand or petit juror in any court of the United States, or of any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude; and whoever, being an officer or other person charged with any duty in the selection or summoning of jurors, excludes or fails to summon any citizen for such cause shall be fined not more than \$5,000. (June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 696.)

It is impossible to locate the federal government which passed this statute in the courthouses of Mississippi.

The Federal Police Force

Unhappily, the federal police force is just as good as the federal judges and juries.

The federal police force consists of the Secret Service, U.S. marshals, Treasury Department agents and the FBI. With its 6,140 agents, the FBI constitutes the overwhelming majority of this federal police force and is the branch of the federal police force most often involved in the efforts to protect the rights of those engaged in the civil rights movements—or the lack of such efforts.

Because the FBI is a thoroughly segregated agency, one has no difficulty explaining the conduct of the agents in the South. (The little city of Norfolk, Virginia, with only 300 policemen, has more Negro policemen on its 300-man force than the FBI has on its 6,000-man force.) The FBI in the South is just as good as the city and state policemen of the south, and the Civil Rights Movement knows it.

To secure protection from the federal government during the Summer Project, SNCC issued a series of news releases throughout the spring and summer explaining the plight of those who work in the civil rights movement in Mississippi. One such news release

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described the FBI: “. . . in Mississippi they are always white, generally southern, and usually from Mississippi. Like the state law enforcement officers, these FBI Agents often serve to obstruct rather than aid the administration of justice in civil rights cases.” (Emphasis supplied.)

During the Summer Project, this basic position of the FBI didn't change. Chief Ben Collins of Clarksdale, Mississippi, has been repeatedly accused by the white and Negro civil rights workers of being involved in acts of intimidation and brutality—all of which Collins denies. During July, Ben Collins was asked about this matter by a northern reporter and he boasted that the FBI had not bothered him about these charges, so “evidently there's not anything to it.” He added, “The FBI comes in here every day and we have coffee every day. We're good friends.”

This *friendly* federal police force posture continued on beyond the summer even as the civil rights program continued beyond the summer. On October 28, 1964, in McComb, Mississippi, another vivid example of the FBI friendship was given in a SNCC report after 18 persons had been arrested in that city while attempting to register:

All 18 people—voter registration workers and prospective applicants—were released today—CHARGES DROPPED.

No reason for the release was given by Pike County officials. . . .

Five of those jailed reported some kind of physical abuse while in jail. Mrs. Aylene Quinn reported being bruised when an electrical jail door was slammed on her. Mrs. Spinks had her arm twisted very badly. Rev. Malcolm Campbell, Douglas Jenkins and Marshall Ganz [Campbell from Canada, Jenkins from McComb and Ganz from California and SNCC staff] reported having been kicked, knocked around or arms twisted in some painful way.

Mendy Samstein, white SNCC worker from New York, actually saw Mrs. Spinks being pushed around and having her arm twisted by a man who later turned out to be a *state investigator*. Then after Mendy talked with the other four who had been physically hurt, it turned out that the same man had done the work in each case. This is the same man who told Ursula Junk when she was arrested in September that she “ain't got no rights in Mississippi.”

As they were released from jail and taken outside of the jail, Mendy noticed the man standing around. He went over to him and asked his name but the man would not give it out. Mendy then walked over to the

FBI agents standing there, explained to him that this state investigator had been harassing people in jail, and asked them to come with him so that he could identify the man to them. Then the FBI men and Mendy started walking toward the door into which the state investigator had disappeared and just at the entrance a large group of state troopers surrounded them and blocked the doorway.

At that point the FBI men began to move away as if to indicate that they were not with Mendy. Mendy went after them and said that he wanted to identify the man to them and they said something to the effect of "don't tell us how to run our investigations." Mendy then said that he had a right to tell them how to run investigations since he had seen the man twist Mrs. Spinks' arm. They then mumbled something about come down to the office. Then the state investigator walked out of the building. Mendy then pointed him out to the agents. They walked away with no comment.

Later, John Beecher, a SNCC volunteer in McComb, reported that the same state investigator had come a few days earlier to the McComb Freedom House with the same FBI agents and that they seemed to be quite friendly.

Even J. Edgar Hoover, FBI director, admits to the nature of the Mississippi law enforcement officials:

Around Philadelphia, Miss., law enforcement is practically nil and many times sheriffs and deputies participate in crime.

—November 19, 1964, *Washington Post*

Yet the conduct of the FBI agents described in the SNCC report is not uncommon and is to be expected. Many FBI agents resign from the FBI to assume "investigation jobs" for the southern states, as did Hugh Clegg, the former FBI official who, as special assistant to the Chancellor of Ole Miss, did such an outstanding job of helping the state defy the admission of James Meredith to the university.

The *friendliness* by the FBI agents is but an extension of the attitude of the director of the bureau, J. Edgar Hoover. On Hoover's visit to Jackson, Mississippi, on June 10, 1964, to open up a branch office of the FBI in Mississippi, a great deal of time was spent by Hoover visiting with Governor Paul B. Johnson. One reporter called it a "love feast." Quite lavishly Hoover praised Governor Johnson as a "man I greatly admire."

The hundreds in Mississippi engaged in the Summer Project—as well as the nation itself—were stunned.

It was difficult to understand how Hoover could be so crude.

This Paul Johnson whom Hoover was praising was the same Paul Johnson who, after being called a "moderate by Mississippi standards" by a column of Drew Pearson, hurriedly convened a press conference to deny that he was "moderate" and buttressed his self-praise by making extended remarks extolling the virtues of the White Citizens Council. This was the same Paul Johnson who, as Lieutenant Governor of Mississippi, had taken advantage of Governor Ross Barnett's transportation difficulties in getting from Jackson to Oxford by grabbing some of the "glory" of defying the federal marshals as they sought to enroll James Meredith. This was the same Paul B. Johnson who had defeated a Republican opponent, Rubell Phillips, in the fall of 1963 by convincing the white voters of Mississippi that he hated "niggers" more than Phillips did. And this is the same Paul B. Johnson who is awaiting trial for criminal contempt of the orders of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ordering Ole Miss integration—a step forced on the Justice Department by an incensed Court of Appeals even though the Justice Department wanted to drop the whole matter for fear of embarrassing the Kennedy Administration, which had a not-too-well-known degree of complicity in the acts of defiance of Barnett and Johnson.*

The earlier visit of Allen Dulles, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), to Mississippi had been of the same order as the Hoover visit.

There is little need to belabor the truth that there is not one mystical federal government in Washington and that the federal government is a somewhat imperfect chameleon with a character in each state similar to the character of the state. The most cursory examination proves the obvious, especially in Mississippi:

* Frank E. Smith, *Congressman from Mississippi*, p. 305, discusses private arrangements with the Kennedy Administration to allow integration of Ole Miss while publicly feigning defiance. Similar arrangements were made for a charade at the University of Alabama in 1963, when Governor George Wallace "stood in the school-house door," and by Eisenhower in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957.

- The federally subsidized national guard is racially segregated in Mississippi and elsewhere in the South.
- The federal postal system mirrors the patterns of segregation locally. Patronage is handled in Mississippi and elsewhere in the South by racist officials of states and reflects their racial views.
- The federal school lunch program is racially administered with Negro schools getting the worst of it.
- Farm subsidies are racially administered to the detriment of southern Negroes in Mississippi and elsewhere.
- Federal installations (both military and civilian) show patterns of racial limitations on employment, assignment and promotion.
- State unemployment services (federally subsidized) are racially segregated.
- Hospitals built with federal funds deny service because of race or segregate in dispensing available service.

You name it. It's all totally segregated or only tokenly integrated. The chameleon nature of the federal government either permits or requires the similarity between the federal and state governments.

Mississippi and the Mississippi Summer Project provide a relatively uncluttered view of our nation. For nowhere else is the relationship between the state government and the federal government so deep and substantial.

For every \$3 in federal taxes collected from the state of Mississippi, the state received approximately \$6.50 in return, plus other moneys that aren't divisible as to what exact share of the benefit went to the state: \$270,793,000 federal tax collected and \$644,617,217 federal moneys spent. The excess of moneys spent by the federal government over what is collected, or approximately \$373,824,217, constitutes more than 30 per cent of the annual income of the state.

In spite of this involvement, the federal administration—both Democratic and Republican—feigned helplessness to protect the lives of persons involved in the Mississippi Summer Project. (This lie was refuted by public assertions of the National Lawyers Guild in a legal memorandum presented to President Lyndon B. Johnson and also by the statement of 29 of the nation's outstanding law professors. No credible source has agreed with the federal government's assertions of helplessness.)

READERS' VIEWPOINT

PLEASE SIGN YOUR NAME—KEEP LETTERS BRIEF

Can Mississippi Afford Goldwater?

Editor — I would like to comment on what I think is the most important and the most ignored feature of the current political campaign.

Mississippi just cannot afford Goldwater—or any other brand of economic conservatism! A rich state (i. e., one which pays more to the Federal treasury than it receives in Federal funds) can afford to advocate conservatism. A poor state (Mississippi receives more than \$3 for every \$1 paid in Federal taxes) cannot.

What part of the federal expenditures in Mississippi should be deleted from the budget? Shall we give up the \$186 million which came into the state for prime military contracts in the fiscal year 1963, or the \$78 million for prime NASA contracts? Shall we do without social security payments (\$127 million) or maybe the school milk and lunch programs (\$7 million)?

Who needs the Federal fund for college construction, research, and fellowships which totaled \$10 million for the period 1961-63, or the college student loan program of \$3.8 million and the college housing loan program of \$15 million over the same period? Maybe the \$3.7 million in Federal vocational education funds is expendable?

The Federal highway construction program brought \$116.8 million into the state during 1961-1963 and created 17.7 million man-hours of employment.

The 60,136 veterans and their dependents receive \$4.4 million in monthly payments in the State of Mississippi. Mississippi farmers received \$18.2 million in Government payments in the year 1963.

Do you really feel that Mississippi, with the lowest per capita income in the United States, can afford to give up the assistance that it gets from the other states — because that is what this imbalance (Between payments to and receipts from the Federal Government) actually reflects?

Lynn Johnson
707 Lakeland Dr.
Jackson, Miss.

Letter to the editor which appeared on the editorial page of the *Jackson (Miss.) Daily News*, Friday, October 30, 1964, p. 9.

In spite of the involvement of the federal government in Mississippi and the fact that the efforts of SNCC, CORE and the other civil rights groups working in the state are actually performing a function that is really not their affair, but is the prime business of government (insuring the enjoyment of Constitutional rights by citizens long denied those rights), these civil rights workers were less protected than Peace Corpsmen working in faraway continents. Even to this date, the FBI asserts that "it can only investigate, not protect."

This statement was only true when the persons seeking the protection were not important enough to risk impinging upon the "state-federal" relationship. While Hoover of the FBI was in Jackson, Mississippi, mouthing this statement in July, the same night some 50 FBI agents, with guns bared, surrounded a church in McComb, Mississippi, to *investigate* because there was a Congressman inside the church speaking to the Movement. When Congressman Don Edwards (Dem., Calif.) left, the *investigation* ended.

The summer that wouldn't end—the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964—if it does nothing more, should teach some and remind others that with regard to ending the racism of America the federal government is not so much helpless as it is unwilling.

All of the "great" social legislation passed in recent times to end the pressing problems of our nation (poverty program, surplus food program, urban renewal, manpower development and training, farmers home administration, crop support program, area redevelopment administration, welfare program, etc.) is drafted to maintain local direction and control of the federal money and power. This enables the "things-as-they-are people"—be they in Mississippi or in Montana—to maintain the status quo.

What the federal government doesn't do directly to perpetuate and reinforce local power blocks, it does indirectly.

Pontius Pilate-like, at the orientation of the summer volunteers in Oxford, Ohio, the federal government, through John Doar of the Justice Department, washed its hands. The federal government in effect said that the Constitutional rights to both life and liberty are placed "in the hands of local law enforcement agencies," i.e.,

Sheriff Lawrence Rainey of Philadelphia and Chief Ben Collins of Clarksdale.

The results of the hand-washing were both inevitable and deadly.

There's need for a second look at the federal government, the government with the nickname "Uncle Sam."

Though world pressure had mounted to such an extent that the federal police force by November 18, 1964, had arrested or assisted in the arrest of approximately 25 persons out of the thousands guilty of civil rights deprivations in Mississippi, on the same day the widely reported utterances of the Hon. J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI, indicated that the arrests were merely a temporary phenomenon:

Over and over the FBI Director emphasized that it is not his agency's business to guard anyone. This, he said, includes protecting the President and "wet nursing" those "who go down to reform the South."

November 19, 1964, *Washington Post*

Hoover's other comments of November 18, 1964, were the beginning of a bizarre episode in the prosecution of the accused killers of the three civil rights workers in Neshoba County.

On November 18, Hoover criticized the Warren Commission (the group which had investigated the murder of President John F. Kennedy), berated the judiciary of the nation for "coddling the convicted," and called the noted civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, a "notorious liar."

These charges, which were repeated several times, have never been retracted.

National reaction was swift.

Civil rights organizations, liberal groups and the northern press (including *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Herald Tribune*) either joined in demanding the ouster of Hoover or criticized the incompetence or inaction of the FBI. Other forces equally as influential demanded that nothing be done to Hoover. On both sides the pressure mounted. The potential destructive effect on President Lyndon B. Johnson's plans for the "Great Society" was obvious.

For reasons not yet clear, on Wednesday, December 2, 1964,

Martin Luther King suddenly decided to make a pilgrimage to the office of Hoover in Washington. The two of them, plus some aides, spent more than an hour in private consultation. It is not known what Hoover said to King or what Hoover might have shown him. As an intimidated King left the conference he made few comments, but he did state that Hoover had not apologized.

King's going to Hoover dissipated some of the pressure. This was the first step. The second step occurred on Friday, December 4, 1964.

Sheriff Lawrence Rainey of Neshoba County and his deputy, Cecil Price, along with 19 others, were arrested by the FBI on charges of violating the civil rights of Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner by killing them. The news was treated sensationally, with some papers putting out special editions to hail the event. The critics of the inaction of the FBI and the Justice Department became flatterers of the two organizations.

The pressure was off—completely. Gone were the demands for Hoover's retirement. Praise was effusive.

Six days later, Thursday, December 10, 1964, at a preliminary hearing before the United States Commissioner in Meridian, Mississippi, Esther Carter, the charges against the sheriff and others were dropped. The function of a preliminary hearing is to determine if there is enough evidence to justify holding an arrested person until a federal grand jury can be convened to decide if the accused person should be indicted.

At the preliminary hearing the government gave evidence—raising doubts as to whether it had any.

An FBI agent merely *said* that he had a written confession from one of the 21 men implicating all of them in the murders. The defense lawyers objected, and the FBI agent's statement about what he had in written form was not considered—and correctly so.

Casual television viewers of *The Defenders* and *Perry Mason* recognized the FBI agent's statement as being hearsay of the rankest kind. But a spokesman for the Justice Department pretended to be startled. He said:

"In the experience of the department, the refusal by a U.S. Com-

missioner to accept a law enforcement officer's report of a signed confession at a preliminary hearing is totally without precedent."

Lawyers who regularly practice in the criminal courts hope that the spokesman for the Justice Department was "misquoted." For if the spokesman wasn't misquoted, the Justice Department is admitting that it has wrongfully caused a lot of persons to be held for grand juries illegally. Hearsay is incompetent evidence, and persons should not be deprived of their liberty by the use of incompetent evidence—the kind of evidence that is not permitted in court.

Conveniently, the civil rights organizations abandoned their lawyers and began to repeat the utterance of the Justice Department spokesman as if it were gospel. The liberal press of the nation did the same. If any newspaper had made a simple inquiry to a competent lawyer, it would have found the answer: Esther Carter, United States Commissioner for the Eastern Division of the Southern District of Mississippi, was correct in dismissing the charges when the only evidence was the word of an FBI agent that he had some evidence. And the onus wouldn't have shifted from the FBI.

The pattern seems to be set.

Each step and episode of the attempted prosecution of those accused of the murders of the three civil rights workers in Neshoba will be a farce, with the federal agency and the public-relations outlets coming out the victor and the concept of justice being the loser. No matter what the outcome of any number of arrests, charges and releases, the nature of the federal government and the function of the FBI might well be studied and questioned.

There's a need to remember that the work of SNCC, CORE and the others in the South—getting people registered as voters, trying to feed and clothe them during the winter months, and trying to secure protection for people from the violence—is not the real function of any private organization; it is the function of the federal government because of the nature of state governments. We must also remember that there ought not to be occasions when supporting organizations—private in nature—are needed to assist these civil rights organizations as they go about trying to do the federal government's job.

V

Supporting Organizations

I've seen daylight breaking high above the bough,
I've found my destination and I've made my vow:
So whether you abhor me or deride me or ignore me,
Mighty mountains loom before me,
And I won't stop now.

—Naomi Long Nadgett
Greenwood, Mississippi, Freedom School

PARTIALLY because of the indifference of the northern press during the early stages of the planning of the Mississippi Summer Project, and partially because SNCC had no money to supply COFO with postage, during the spring of 1964 the Mississippi spokesmen gained the initiative in the field of public relations.

Jimmy Ward, editor of the Jackson *Daily News*, and others began calling the Summer Project an "invasion."

Incestuously, this propaganda was sucked back into the minds of its propagators. . . . Vast expenditures for additional policemen (the Highway Patrol forces and the Jackson police were doubled) and armament (including a \$13,000 tank for Jackson) were made; vacations were canceled. Mississippi prepared for what its propaganda had created: a state of war.

This armament became a million-dollar monument to the power of two lies, one announced and the other "concealed." The announced purpose was that the military might would be used to repel

the "invaders." The unspoken one was that the might was intended for the preservation of school segregation in the fall of 1964, when the federal courts had ordered token integration to begin. Be that as it may, the Summer Project was an "invasion" and the summer volunteers were "troops" who were part of a vast northern "army."

This army had its medical corps, chaplains, signal corps, "U.S.O." and "judge advocate general department" (lawyers).

The Medical Committee for Human Rights

Every army needs a medical corps.

The troops involved in the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964 were no exception; they needed a medical corps, and they had one. It was the Medical Committee For Human Rights, which was founded on June 27, 1964.

The idea for the utilization of the professional skills of those in the medical science had many sources, and no one person should be given the credit. If any persons should be singled out of the many, they should be Dr. Tom Levin and Dr. Marvin Belsky, who have pushed this program so hard.

Understandably, parents have a lot of concern for their kids, and this concern was translated into positive results, because many of the more than 800 volunteers in the Summer Project had mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles and brothers who were in the medical field. The Medical Committee for Human Rights provided these relatives with a legitimate excuse to be on the scene and to render service while at the same time not seeming to protect or guard those whom they loved.

There were others in the medical profession who thought that the work of this committee would provide them with a chance to participate in a meaningful way in supporting a Movement that the totality of their hearts and beings wanted to see succeed. Whatever the *prime* motivation for the involvement, the results were commendable.

The Medical Committee was but one genius of the Movement in Mississippi; it provided more and more opportunities for people to

feel that they were worth something, that they were not just machines consumed by their own selfishness. For years the civil rights efforts indicated, by implication, that the only things those persons living in northern communities could do for the civil rights effort were to donate money, send telegrams and walk picket lines when some matter deserved a show of bodies.

Few concerned people find it completely satisfactory to be involved in pursuing their ideals by merely giving money—although it's greatly needed. Concerned people are more than money machines. Fortunately for SNCC, as it was organizing the Summer Project, it stumbled on to this. A place for those with medical skills was found.

This medical group established what it called a "medical presence" for the civil rights movement in Mississippi. This presence was achieved by contacting all 57 Negro doctors in the state and setting up liaison. In addition to the Negro physicians, some six white doctors practicing in Mississippi gave help, as did one or two medical institutions.

This contact was made easy by the character of the northern doctors involved, whose national reputations extended to Mississippi. Colleagues who knew the northern doctors only by reputation eagerly sought out contact with the specialists.

With this entree the Medical Committee was able to establish a rudimentary system of care for the urgent medical needs of the civil rights workers in many parts of the state, although not in all. It set up nine major stations and many more substations for emergencies, along with a referral system in to Jackson (where the best medical facilities of Mississippi are located) and beyond when necessary.

During the months of June, July and August, 1964, the Medical Committee sent 100 representatives into the state, including doctors, nurses, counselors and other medical workers, who performed medical tasks short of the actual practice of medicine. Among those who went were such specialists as psychiatrists, pediatricians, dermatologists, orthopedic surgeons, cardiologists, and registered nurses.

As these persons served, they learned. They saw and felt the inter-

locking chain of exploitation, poverty, discrimination, disease and human neglect that damns the South in the eyes of the world. From interviews they learned that the health problems of Negroes in Mississippi not only shocked the outsider but also were considered vital political issues that older Negroes, especially, were willing to fight about.

Wherever the members of the medical teams stopped—freedom schools, community centers, homes, and crossroad gatherings—they heard complaints about the high costs of medical care, the inadequate and callous treatment in segregated offices and facilities, the utter lack of state programs in such important medical areas as chronic diseases. To the surprise of some, they found local people who could place the medical problems in an historical-political perspective and liken the medical situation to the school situation of 100 years ago.

(The first public schools in Mississippi and the South were created by the Reconstruction legislatures. There were no schools for either the slaves or the poor white persons. The planters, who controlled the states, were wealthy enough not to need schools; they could employ tutors for their children.)

Added to the medical problems of the state, which stemmed from the lack of medical aid programs, were the problems involved in programs that were supposed to exist. The Medical Committee for Human Rights, in its report prepared and published on August 16, 1964, described the malfunctioning of the "existing" medical programs:

We have found there to be many programs, inadequate though they may be, that Mississippi provides on paper to maintain the health of its people. These range from the prenatal clinic, to the checking of school children's eyesight and hearing, to the pittance in medical assistance for the aged on welfare. But even these programs barely reach out to the rural Negro.

One can only say that there is a conspiracy of silence when one seeks to discover what programs are available. Too often in too many parts of the state and in Jackson itself, our medical teams—as well as the COFO workers—have been refused information on these programs. And so often as to be all but universal, these programs are unknown

to the rural poor, who spend their medical moneys on doctoring for ultimate emergencies—many of which might have been avoided with preventive medical care that is even now currently available.

It would be a great service to make known to the people in each county just what services are available now, at what cost, at what time, and where. Our teams and some of the COFO projects have made a beginning at this. It should be expanded and systematized. And this information will in most cases *not* be available for the asking, but must be dug out painstakingly and tactfully from the [white] patients themselves who use the facilities.

This information, by the way, can provide part of the factual underpinning for a health program for the future.

Equally in danger of malfunctioning, the medical teams found, was the veteran staff of COFO, especially the SNCC workers, who constitute 80 per cent of the staff. (The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), being more affluent, can, and often does, pay its staff members in excess of \$100 weekly. The SNCC field secretaries get \$9.64 weekly—when it's available.)

In a world where life is valuable, the COFO staff members are slightly more than precious because they are the *true believers*, the ones who, more than any group in America today, show promise of bringing the nation up to the status of the "beloved community," where, suddenly, it may be more important to send the children of white and black laborers to college than to send astronauts to the moon. These young men and women are the ones threatening to alter the nation's values so drastically, so that, without notice, the value of new hospitals may someday exceed the esteem of new launching pads for Saturn rockets.

The starting place is Mississippi, a jungle that extracts its toll even as it is transformed. Far too long has the COFO staff lived the life of a chicken in a den of jackals. Far too long have these people worked in communities where their existence has depended upon the inaccuracy of a sheriff's aim or the faultiness of a bomber's fuse. The COFO staff is tired—continuously; malnourished—continuously; tense—continuously; and frustrated—continuously. And the medical teams knew it. The doctors found everything from infected mosquito bites and badly decaying teeth to broken glasses.

The Medical Committee reminded the staff members repeatedly of the fact known to all: that eventually the physical condition of the staff would lead to suffering in both efficiency and morale. Physical examinations were given to the staff and individual recommendations were made based on the medical findings. Local physicians prescribed treatment and medicines where indicated.

As the medical team members served in Mississippi they became addicts.

The "mystique" of the Movement infected them.

Regardless of whether the motivation for the individual member of the Medical Committee coming to Mississippi had been shallow or profound, the heat, horror and commonplace heroics impelled him toward several conclusions: that this is a serious struggle for serious stakes; that we all have to be more than summer soldiers; that, just as the Movement goes on from the summer, we must go on too; that, to the extent possible, we must not let this summer end.

In August, as it was learned that the Summer Project wouldn't stop, the Medical Committee for Human Rights said that it wouldn't conclude and announced its plans for the future:

1. *A group health plan*—to secure, if possible, the enrollment of the staff continuing in Mississippi in a group health plan of medical and hospital insurance.

2. *Health education*. "We think that we have a role to play with regard to the freedom schools and the community centers. It's not to provide doctors or nurses to go to them, at least in any significant numbers. It's to work with the COFO staff to prepare materials and an actual training course for COFO workers and local people in various fields of health: first aid, personal hygiene, sex education, nutrition, and mother and child care."

3. *Health research*. "COFO began, before we did, in analyzing the health problem of the Mississippi Negro. There is much more to be done: to learn more about the distribution of federal and Public Health Service funds; to find out what moneys might be available; to develop programs for involving the federal government in more direct and meaningful ways in the Mississippi health picture; to develop strategies to desegregate hospitals. Beyond money, we must

develop pilot studies and field programs, often with foundation support, in areas that Mississippi has failed to touch such as mental health for children, dental services for the rural areas, and the like."

4. *Professional training.* "It is a disgrace and a scandal in America that Mississippi Negroes have no access to medical school; that in the last four years there has no longer been a colored nursing school; that the midwives, so important to the Negro mothers in the rural areas, are so little trained and supervised. We think that we have a role to play in this area that is important for the dignity of the Negro and for the assurances of his health."

5. *Rest and recreation.* The Medical Committee is developing facilities for a rest and recreation program to accommodate physically overworked and mentally strained COFO workers who have been in the field for long periods without adequate food, hygiene and rest.

The Medical Committee is committed to continue. "As long as there is a COFO, there will be doctors," Dr. Robert Axelrod has stated. Many doctors throughout the nation have learned of the committee's work, and hundreds of applications have poured into the office of the committee at 211 West 56th Street, New York, New York, to be assigned to work in Mississippi.

As the summer volunteers remained in part in Mississippi, so did the Medical Committee for Human Rights remain—in part.

Photographic Corps

In addition to the photographers of the national news media, COFO had its own photographic staff.

SNCC field secretary Willie Blue, after extensive training in New York by a "motion-picture committee" headed by Pete Smollet and Hortense Beveridge (working out of the Calpenny Studios), was equipped with 16-millimeter and 8-millimeter cameras and covered the state on assignments.

"Still-picture" coverage was provided by the Southern Documentary Project, headed by Matt Herron, who directed three other professional photographers. The activities of these project members

were in addition to the efforts of Cliff Vaughns, SNCC field secretary, who for over a year has been COFO's "photographer in residence."

The "U.S.O."*

The cultural corps of the Summer Project had two units: the Mississippi Caravan of Music and the Free Southern Theater.

Consisting of an integrated troupe of eight persons headed by its founders, John O'Neal and Gil Moses, and Jackie Washington, the gifted singer, the Free Southern Theater toured the freedom schools and community centers, presenting the documentary historical play of Martin Duberman, *In White America*.

Although some were critical because there were no Mississippians in the cast and in some of the communities parts of the play were "over the heads" of a few, the production got mostly rave reviews from culturally parched audiences, which drank in the drama as the roots of the cotton plant gulp water after a drought.

One native Mississippian who had never seen a play before described his reaction to the production of the Free Southern Theater: "I sat there on the edge of the seat, with one hand holding me to it, to keep from jumping up and screaming through the veil of heaven, 'Yes! Tell it!' With the other hand, I was wiping tears from my eyes that were laden with love, sorrow, joy, pity—and hate. I was born in Mississippi. And by the act of God or a cracker sheriff I'll probably die here. They were telling my story on that stage. Oh, they were telling it . . . and telling it like it *really* is."

Amen.

From its base in New Orleans, where new plays are being prepared, the Free Southern Theater is coming into Mississippi and other parts of the Deep South again and again, feeding the souls through the senses and stopping the changes of seasons by not letting the work begun during the summer of 1964 end—and not letting the summer end.

* During the years of World War II and after, the entertainment of the American soldier was carried out by the United Service Organization (U.S.O.).

Ordinarily one would think that sending folk singers to Mississippi (the home of Mississippi John Hurt, Big Bill Bronzy and other giants of soul music) would be like taking salt water to San Francisco or coal to Kentucky.

Not so.

For the most part, the Mississippi Negroes—and the whites, too—are not organized within their own communities for cultural and recreational activities. Thousands of rural churches—those that haven't been burned down—meet only once and sometimes twice a month, “when the preacher makes his circuit.” In the hundreds of joints where the sheriff's liquor is sold, the people are either without music or dependent upon a tired jukebox with music from another world.

Because of the Mississippi Caravan of Music, coordinated by Bob and Susan Cohen during the Summer Project, the 30 project centers throughout the state had plenty of what one bard called “soul” music.

The singers and musicians traveled around the state in groups. After completing a program at one freedom school or community center, the caravan traveled to another, usually a trip of no more than one or two hours. Once there, say in the afternoon, the members held an informal workshop with the students. These “workshops”—a better name would have been “playshops”—generally wound up with whatever the singers or children were most interested in: anything from folk dancing and African rounds to English ballads and learning the banjo chords for “Skip to My Lou.” After time out for supper, there was a mass meeting with singing or perhaps a “hootenanny,” where the adult population of the community attended with the younger people, who were at the freedom school during the day. It was not uncommon for these evening sessions to go on for more than three hours.

The Mississippi Caravan of Music was a success for a lot of reasons. It worked at giving renewed status to the music of Huddie Leadbetter and Big Bill Bronzy and the others whom Mississippians had been taught to hate because they were both black and Mississippian. The caravan was a success also because of the kind of people

who gave their time to it during the Summer Project: Len Chandler, Bob Cohen, Judy Collins, Jim Crockett, Barbara Dane, Dick Davey, Alix Dobkin, the Eastgate Singers (Adam and Paul Cochran, James Mason and Jim Christy), Jim and Jean Golver, Carolyn Hester, Greg Hildebrand, Roger Johnson, Peter La Farge, Julius Lester, Phil Ochs, Cordell Reagan, Pete Seeger, David Segal, Ricky Sherover, Gil Turner, Jackie Washington and Don Winkleman.

And the caravan didn't end. Guitar whammers, banjo pluckers, harmonica squealers, and singers of all kinds are still *stealing away* a week from the bright lights of the concert stages and the dim lights of funk-filled cafés to tour the Mississippi freedom schools and community centers, where they experience the realities of singing the verse of “We Shall Overcome” that says “we are not afraid” within a circle of locked arms—while knowing that the building has been promised to be bombed.

“Chaplain Corps”

Not only did the National Council of Churches (NCC) provide the place for the orientation of the “troops” (Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio) and convene a gathering of educators in New York City in the late spring to help construct the curriculum of the freedom school, but it also saturated the State of Mississippi with a heavenly host of ministers, priests and rabbis during the summer months—400 of them on a rotating basis.

Given the title of “resident director” and set up in a Jackson office at 507½ North Farish Street, the Rev. Warren McKenna would have been more aptly called “resident conductor”: his ministers flowed in and out of the state in a constant stream.

√Supposedly the prime function of the clergy was to act as “minister-counselors to volunteers in projects.” Translated into Movement language, this meant that the clergymen licked stamps, ran mimeograph machines, drafted leaflets, drove cars, mopped floors, outran sheriffs, inhabited jails, got heads split, canvassed for voters, taught at freedom schools, led singing, taught crafts and occasionally preached at a local Negro church. In other words, the

clergymen did what everybody else in the Summer Project did—any job that needed doing at the particular moment.

So “regular” were the clergymen that some of the atheists began to wonder what corrupting influence was cleansing religion of so much of its stodginess: it was enough to shake one’s profoundly religious views that churches have no place in an earthly hell.

Because of their church credentials, the clergymen were able to establish considerable contact with the Mississippi clergy, both white and black. For what it was worth, there were thousands of covert meetings during the summer in the offices and homes of white ministers with drawn shades.

Even the lawyers were impressed. A guild-sponsored attorney, Eugene Crane of Chicago, who was stationed in Hattiesburg (in the southeastern area of Mississippi where Rabbi Arthur Lelyveld of Cleveland, Ohio, was beaten with a metal pipe), described the Hattiesburg operation of the National Council of Churches clergymen:

They set up a house in Hattiesburg and one of the rooms had 14 mattresses spread on the floor. There was a 30-gallon hot water heater which supplied constant hot water to provide for 20 people to take two showers a day. This they felt could only have been done through “Divine intervention.”

The ministers were extremely active and extremely militant. They seemed to be a cohesive element. They helped us in many instances in approaching the police structure and arranging bail in some cases. They have developed some contact with the police department. They seemed to have developed a great deal of contact in the community. On one occasion they were able to raise bond money from unknown sources within two hours to release one defendant.

The ministers also seemed to be very interested in active militant action by the local community people and were active out in the communities themselves constantly. After canvassing with the voter registration and Freedom Registration in Negro neighborhoods, they finally switched to the canvassing in the white neighborhood.

These were not summer chaplains to summer soldiers.

Just as the Mississippi power structure thought—hoped—the National Council of Churches would flee the state at the end of August, the NCC Commission on Race and Religion shifted itself into the

Delta Ministry, a project to deal with the problems of automation in the cotton fields of Mississippi, where thousands are nearly starving because the chopping of cotton is now done by “poisoning” the fields (spraying with chemicals) and the picking is done by a host of machines that don’t need to eat.

The Delta Ministry will seek to get as many of the dispossessed persons on relief as are eligible, and in some cases there may be direct aid to those ineligible for relief by the National Council of Churches through the months long beyond that part of year mortals call summer.

Legal Corps

The last census of Mississippi shows the state to have a population of 2,178,141 persons, with 42.3 per cent of that population, or 920,595 persons, composed of black would-be citizens.

The best available figures show that there are 2,100 lawyers in the state, or close to one lawyer per 1,000 persons—if, and only if, you don’t want to challenge the systematic exclusion of Negroes from juries; if you don’t object to racial signs and racial segregation in the court and the community; if you are not litigating against a white person and insisting that your black skin not be sacrificed to perpetuate the “white fictions” of those who run Mississippi.

If you fall in the category of one of these “if’s,” then there are only four lawyers in Mississippi: three black barristers and one white one. It would appear that this grouping should include the 300 young white people working throughout the state today with SNCC (they’re not *white* in the Mississippi definition) and the 920,595 Negroes who at any fortuitous moment may find part of their lives (or all) and part of their property (or all) taken away “legal-like” by some Mississippi court, either state or federal.

How drastic the ratio changes for the “if’s.”

Instead of one lawyer per 1,000 persons, it becomes one lawyer per every 230,250 persons. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee decided that additional legal help would be needed for the Summer Project of 1964 . . . and three legal groups responded.

One group was composed of law students solely, operating under the banner: Law Students Civil Rights Research Council. It was the duty of Hunter Morey, SNCC field secretary and legal coordinator for COFO, to assign these law students to areas of responsibility throughout the state. The students prepared arrest data, collected affidavits, contacted the FBI, collected evidence of voting discrimination, and "clerked" for whatever lawyers happened to be in the same part of the state where the law students were assigned—lawyers from either the Lawyers Guild Committee for Legal Aid to the South (CLAS) or the Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee (LCDC).

During the summer of 1964, there were 15 such students who served for two months or more: William Robinson, Sherwin Kaplan, Alan M. Lerner, Lowell Johnston, Dan Perlman, Miss Cornelia McDougal, George Johnson, Mike Starr, Mike Smith, Bob Watkins, Richard Wheelock, Larry Hansen, Bennett Gershman, Leonard Edwards and Clinton Hopson.

The LCDC was composed of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (called the "President's Committee" because it was formed out of a conference of lawyers called to the White House by President Kennedy during the hot summer of 1963), the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (the Ink Fund), the American Jewish Committee, CORE, the American Jewish Congress, and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). This group placed 40 lawyers in the state on a rotating basis and stationed another 20 at two places outside of the state—Memphis, Tennessee, and New Orleans, Louisiana.

The credit of the sizable entourage of lawyers operating in the state for the Summer Project under the sponsorship of the LCDC must be given to the Guild, the third part of the legal triumvirate.

The Guild (a national bar association of more than 25 years' existence) became involved in the civil rights movement of the 1960's shortly before the annual conference of the SNCC staff held in Atlanta in the late summer of 1962.

As fate would have it, this SNCC conference came on the heels of a series of confrontations between SNCC and Jack Greenberg's

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (the Ink Fund).

Never having had money, SNCC has always depended upon those with resources to do what they could. Greenberg's Ink Fund publicly billed itself as "the legal arm of the entire civil rights movement" and had handled several cases involving arrests of SNCC field secretaries throughout the South. Initially the Ink Fund had indicated that it would probably handle any case that SNCC asked it to handle. But that was before the Ink Fund really understood the aggressive nature of SNCC. SNCC was pushy and pushing. It had protests going hard, fast and furious in Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia. Moments after each arrest, Greenberg would get a collect call for legal help. The pushiness of SNCC was extending and distending the carefully allocated Ink Fund budget and staff. Greenberg's response was to indicate to SNCC that it should cease being so aggressive, because the Ink Fund thought that a "point had been proven" and that there was no need for new cases before the number of old cases of arrests had tapered down considerably.

The Ink Fund's suggestion was based on consideration of sound Ink Fund fiscal policies. SNCC's opposition was based on its ingrained dedication to attacking and attacking—again, again, again—the citadels of Southern segregation.

Wisely, the Ink Fund pressured for a slowdown by indicating that it didn't intend to take care of the defense of persons arrested because of the far-flung SNCC efforts. This *promise* had far-reaching implications for the young student organization, which was then entirely dependent upon the Ink Fund for legal aid. There were thought to be no alternatives.

In this setting three lawyers from the National Lawyers Guild's newly formed committee dealing with civil rights were invited to address the SNCC staff conference for an hour—and they whaled!

Irving Rosenfeld of Los Angeles flung answers back as fast as the questions were hurled at him by the SNCC staffers about the role of the lawyer as it should be. Vic Rabinowitz of New York kept opening eyes with regard to the creative use of the law in supplementing boycotts, sit-ins and other integration efforts by use of the federal regulatory agencies, such as the Federal Communica-

tions Commission, and by employing some of the old labor cases to enjoin Chief Laurie Pritchette of Albany from preventing all public expression of free speech by the Movement in that city.

The third Guild lawyer of the conference—who was referred to by the odd name of “Snake Doctor”—kept encouraging the filing of some sort of legal monstrosity called an “Omnibus Integration Suit.”

SNCC wasn't *important* then, in 1962. The United States Justice Department declined to send a representative, so the three Guild lawyers were allowed to spill over into the period allocated in the conference schedule for remarks by the Justice Department.

The staff loved it.

They bored into the three lawyers again and again with any question that came to their minds. “What about citizen arrests?” “What sorry lawyer can I get to come to Arkansas and file one of those suits y'all talking about?” “What do you do when there ain't no lawyer and they are proceeding with your trial?” “What should you do when your lawyer tells you to sit on the segregated side of the courtroom and you don't wanna?” “Why aren't the NAACP lawyers like you guys?” “What can be done to get us on the aggressive legally instead of waiting around for another arrest?” “How can we force the FBI to act?”

A thousand questions were asked and a thousand questions were answered. (The answer to many was, “I don't know. But I'll research it.”) Over the meals, into the night, the questions and answers flowed as the SNCC staff gulped in the presence of the three Guild lawyers, who were responsive, unaloof and “regular” and seemed to know *where it was at*.

Two days after this conference ended, Jack Greenberg, accompanied by Wiley Branton, was back in Atlanta at the SNCC national office. The Ink Fund pulled out a “blank check” and gave it to SNCC. Greenberg assured the SNCC leadership that he had been misunderstood. “All cases will be handled. Just call.”

In the fall of 1963, during the mock Freedom Election balloting for Governor of Mississippi, COFO brought 100 northern students into the state to help; they came from Yale and Stanford universi-

ties. These volunteers supplemented the regular COFO staff of 100.

Sole reliance at that time for legal aid was on Greenberg's Ink Fund. It sent no additional legal personnel into the state for the stepped-up project. Good business and fiscal policies would not permit it.

Bad were the results. Jess Brown, Jack Young, and Carsie Hall (three-fourths of the civil rights lawyers in the state), who were inundated by the impossible case loads from the ordinary constant arrests of the Mississippi civil rights workers in ordinary Mississippi times, were drowned by the influx of new cases from the Freedom Election.

SNCC was appalled.

Somebody remembered the Guild and the 1962 conference in Atlanta that had gone so well everyone had tried to find out *where it was at*. SNCC invited the Guild to extend its limited operations in the civil rights field (in Virginia, North Carolina and Louisiana) into Mississippi.

It did.

Then it became fiscally possible for the Ink Fund to send more lawyers into the state and to spend more money during the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964—but not before the Ink Fund had begged, cajoled and threatened in an effort to regain its former monopoly with SNCC in Mississippi.

SNCC didn't budge.

Greenberg did.

The operation of the Guild in the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964, in which it brought into the state 69 lawyers on a rotating basis, was typical of the way that both lawyer groups (LCDC and the Guild) functioned.

A plan was drafted for complete legal coverage of what was called “60 lawyer weeks.” Broken down, this meant that a given lawyer might volunteer to come to Mississippi and stay for one week, in which event the Guild would have “one lawyer week.” If that same lawyer had volunteered for two weeks, there would be “two lawyer weeks.”

The figure of 60 lawyer weeks was selected because of anticipa-

tion that there would be need for coverage in five different areas of the state, representing the five Congressional districts of the state. One lawyer for each of the five areas for the 12 weeks of the Summer Project came to 60 lawyer weeks.

In addition to the lawyers in the state, a reserve system was set up whereby 90 other lawyers volunteered to spend at least 40 hours during the summer preparing briefs, legal memoranda, and the other work that didn't require on-the-scene presence.

The customary day for the changing of "shifts" was Sunday, and the most popular form of transportation was flying. Usually George Crockett of Detroit got involved in a shuttling service to the airport—taking 6 to 10 lawyers out to the airport and bringing 6 to 10 back from the airport. As the Guild's Mississippi Project director, based in Jackson for the summer, he began his orientation of the incoming lawyers at the Jackson airport and on the 20-minute ride back. Crockett described the beginning of that orientation for life—or death—in Mississippi this way: "It would be interesting if you could hear some of our conversations coming from the airport driving to the city of Jackson because nine times out of ten they have a completely false impression of what they will encounter when they get off the plane. They were surprised that they were not even arrested or that nobody insulted them, or that type of thing.

"They would be frightened—and who isn't frightened in Mississippi?—and the job would be to get *some* of the fear out without at the same time making them too complacent.

"We'd tell them the ropes as we understood them: that it's their primary responsibility to get people out of jail and not to get themselves into jail."

Similarities between the Guild legal operation and that of the LCDC existed in the matters of bail and federal removal actions. Both groups had a bail fund, even though each summer volunteer was supposed to have \$500 bail money as part of his equipment for coming into the state. One reason for the bail fund was that a lot of the people in the Summer Project were local Mississippians who hadn't seen \$500 in their lives. (Work in the cotton fields from sunrise to sunset was paid for at the rate of \$2.50 to \$3 per day.)

The second reason was that the bail money arrangement of the volunteer often consisted of phoning or sending a telegram to someone in the North. Getting the bail money to Mississippi could take a day or so, because the Western Union office in Mississippi's largest city, Jackson, is not open all night and the situation is worse in other communities. Once a summer volunteer is in jail—especially if he is white—deadly consequences can follow. All the guard has to do is tell the other prisoners: "Here's one of those nigger lovers from the North!"

With the more than 1,000 arrests during the months of June, July and August, both legal groups filed petitions which took the cases out of the hands of the state judges and put them in the hands of the federal judges. Paradoxically, the reason that the petitions gave for transferring the case from the state courts to the federal courts was that the civil rights worker could not get a fair trial in the state court. As proof of this assertion, the removal petitions filed by the lawyers pointed out that the juries of the state courts either totally excluded Negroes or only tokenly included them. Secondly, the removal petition asserted that no fair trial could be gotten in the state courts because Negroes were denied the right to vote and therefore didn't help elect the state court judges, who, as a result, could be responsive to rights only in so far as prejudiced white voters viewed those rights.

The paradox is provided by the fact that the very reasons given for no fair trial in the state courts—*from* which the cases were being removed—were true of the federal courts—*to* which the cases were being removed.

During the summer months the law enforcement agencies accused those engaged in the Movement of a wide range of charges: picketing without a permit, disorderly conduct, traffic violations, carrying a concealed weapon (fingernail file), interfering with an officer in the performance of his duty, failing to move on, et cetera. Only once was charged with a felony. (Felonies are crimes for which one may spend more than a year in jail—serious criminal offenses.)

The charges were minor ones: misdemeanors.

This was deliberate.

Mississippi law was certain that the summer would end, that all of the high-powered lawyers would go home, and that all of the summer volunteers would go home. Charging someone with a felony might mean his staying, if for no other reason than to defend himself from the serious charge.

The word "summer" became irrelevant as the Ink Fund and the Guild both set up their Jackson offices on a permanent basis to follow through on the cases begun during the summer . . . and to follow through on future calls from COFO for massive legal assistance, should it be needed . . . and to work with the general counsel employed by COFO at the end of August, 1964.

More often than not, when the individual lawyers working with the two committees of lawyers reached the ends of the periods for which they had initially volunteered, the long-distance phones back to their offices in the North would get "hot." The volunteer lawyers would work at changing schedules in their offices in the North to be able to stay a little longer. Mississippi had "hooked them."

From the response of the lawyer organizations remaining, it is apparent that the individual lawyers were not the only ones so addicted—much to the glory and benefit of COFO.

The change of seasons seems to have ended in the land of the Pearl and Mississippi rivers. For the lawyers who volunteered for a season, the summer hasn't ended.*

* In addition to the legal organizations, there were several unattached lawyers who rendered specific service such as the firm of Kunstler, Kunstler and Kinoy (KKK), which filed several sweeping federal suits seeking to force the intervention of the federal judiciary on the side of the Movement. Morton Stavis of New Jersey joined "KKK" in these actions.

One notation of the legal coordinator of COFO, Hunter Morcy, showed a case involving the death sentence (armed robbery) against John P. Henry in Ruleville, which was dismissed after the intervention of a lawyer referred to as the "Snake Doctor." This type of result certainly wasn't typical; the local power structure must have forgotten momentarily that Ruleville is in Mississippi.

PART TWO

VI

Freedom Schools

Of course he forbade her to give me any further instruction, telling her in the first place that to do so was unlawful, as it was also unsafe, "for," said he, "if you give a nigger an inch he will take an ell. Learning will spoil the best nigger in the world.

"If he learns to read the Bible it will forever unfit him to be a slave. He should know nothing but the will of the master, and learn to obey it.

"As to himself, learning will do him no good, but a great deal of harm, making him disconsolate and unhappy.

"If you teach him how to read, he'll want to know how to write, and this accomplished, he'll be running away with himself." Such was the tenor of Master Hugh's oracular exposition.

"Very well," thought I. "Knowledge unfits a child to be a slave" . . . and from that moment I understood the direct pathway from slavery to freedom.

—*Frederick Douglass*

IF FOR ONE MOMENT we think that the Negroes of the South, of Mississippi, are fools, simpletons, childlike creatures with the bodies of men and the minds of infants because they don't leave the South, it is we who are the idiots. Though perhaps unlettered, unsung and even unwashed, the Negro with his "Dumb Darkie" routine is responding, on his level, to the basic problem of this day—survival.

His critics in the North who cannot understand can find that understanding in the answer to two questions: what will he find in the Harlems? What are we doing when we laugh at the joke of a boss that isn't funny and accept any lie that appears in enough papers or magazines?

More than it has ever been for years, the problem of today and tomorrow is that of survival—staving off the ultimate rendezvous.

For all there is the threat of nuclear destruction. For many there is the threat of a slower death from starvation with its parched lips and blue sleep before passing through eternity. And for Mississippians the odds are unfavorably increased by the legion of the brave sharpshooters, bomb tossers and decapitators.

Though the facts are to the contrary, the Mississippi Negro sees his problem as the problem of color. He knows with unshakable certainty that his poverty, starvation and brutalizing are based on color; the signs—though he may not be able to read them—tell him this, and the “oppressor” keeps saying “nigger” as his black body is robbed of its manhood. Thus the Negro has a convenient one-word explanation for his ills: race.

Eyes in black bodies look at, but don't see, their counterparts in white skins who are bereft of the Negro's convenient explanation: white people are forced to seek their philosophical escape from their hells in a caricature, which mawkishly causes their whiteishness to shout louder and louder, so that sheer volume will convince itself, “All is well. All is well! ALL IS VERY WELL!!”

How piteous are both and all, but yet not at all. Are men to be blamed for getting wet when pushed into a river? Is there guilt in having a reality made of fictions when the manipulators (power structure) deny access to other than make-believe?

Unhappily, but understandably, the public schools are the arch tools of the fictions and the conformity to “Alice in Mississippi-land,” which answer the Negroes' question of “Who am I?” with the word “nigger.” To the white person's question of “Who am I?” the answer is “your skin.”

This is especially disappointing because education is valued so highly by the oppressed as an instrument of partial or total escape

from whatever the oppression happens to be—sex, race, age, religion. Jews denied the right to own land, ghettoized, and slaughtered whenever it served a political gain of a power structure learned that an educated man is a useful man and a useful man is a less persecuted man among the persecuted—for a time. Skills in the arts, sciences and professions made a person a little less “Jewish” at a moment of convenience of the persecutor, and acquiring these skills was less offensive to the persecuted than deliberate uncircumcising, shunning the synagogues or assuming a “goy” name.

And so in Mississippi the feeling is that education makes one a little less “black.”

Why am I persecuted?

“Black” is \$2.50 for a 14-hour day in the Mississippi cotton fields. “Black” is stepping off the sidewalk for a white person 20 years younger than you, and being cheated at the store (be it white- or black-owned) where you cash your welfare checks, and being robbed of land, labor, health and self-esteem while seeing yourself in the image perpetuated by the First National Bank, the Mississippi Power and Light Company and U.S. Senator James Eastland.

“Black” is sharing the *man's* opinion and hatred of poor white people, many of whom live, suffer and die as badly as Negroes without the *comforting* prison of pigmentation as an explanation.

What does the majority culture have that I want?

Because mechanization has become a reality for you in Mississippi (85 per cent of the cotton picked in the Delta last year was picked by machines), you find yourself somehow crowding your *vast* personal belongings into a \$3.75, black, tin-covered suitcase, wrapping a lunch of chicken and baked sweet potatoes and taking the savings, from the little that you didn't have, to buy a ticket north on the Illinois Central Railroad, the Freedom Train.

What does the majority culture have that I don't want?

If perchance you had decided on that trip north to freedom and had gone to begin it on June 28, 1964, you might have been confused. It seems that the Freedom Train was running both ways as groups of whites and a sprinkling of young Negroes—freedom-school teachers—were coming to the place you were leaving: Mississippi.

Not a brighter, more beautiful day in the world has ever come to pass than Sunday, June 28, 1964, in Mississippi. It was the sort of day on which you'd praise all the good gods in the heavens for being alive to see it—except that there was a part of you that was dead, brutally dead, deadly dead, somewhere in Neshoba County near Philadelphia, where god is named Sheriff Lawrence Rainey and the archangel is Deputy Cecil Price.

On this day 275 more persons arrived in Mississippi from Oxford, Ohio, after having attended the second orientation session for the summer volunteers coming into Mississippi. Most of these arrivals were freedom-school teachers.

There were several reasons why these teachers were an encouraging sight for the desperateness of those summer volunteers who had preceded them. When the first group of volunteers had left Oxford on June 20, 1964, death for them in Mississippi had been merely an often-discussed probability. When these teachers arrived on June 28, death in Mississippi during the summer had become an actuality—even though in the far corners of the most pessimistic minds was retained hope that the three were still alive.

The presence of these teachers for the freedom schools was also encouraging because the freedom schools had been singled out for special attention by the Mississippi power structure. The legislators had dredged up from fetid pits a bill to make it illegal to have freedom schools. Copies of this bill had been given to many, if not all, of those in the teacher-training session of the Oxford, Ohio, orientation period—Senate Bill No. 1969:

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI: *Section 1.* Any person, groups of persons, associations and corporations conducting a school in any county within this state shall first apply to the county superintendent of education thereof for a license to conduct such school.

If, after due examination, said county superintendent of education shall determine the said school is in fact for bona fide educational purposes, that said school does not intend to counsel and encourage disobedience to the laws of the State of Mississippi, and that the conduct of said school is in the public interest, he shall forthwith issue a license to the persons, groups of persons, associations or corporations applying for same.

Section 2. Should any person, group of persons, associations or corpora-

tions conduct any type school without obtaining a license as herein before provided, they shall together with any individual acting as professor, teachers, or instructors in said school be guilty of a misdemeanor which shall be punished by a fine of not less than One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) nor more than Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) and/or confinement in the county jail for a period of not less than thirty (30) days nor more than six (6) months.

In the face of this actual intimidation of deaths and laws, the arrival of the teachers was the rainbow sign that the Mississippi Summer Project would at least begin, that the deaths couldn't stop it.

We have walked through the shadow of death—
We've had to walk it all by ourself.
But we'll never turn back . . .
No, we'll never turn back.

My God, they looked good getting off the train in Jackson; and they must have been just as imposing a sight in the other communities along the way as the Freedom Train brought them in.

Nine persons came into Jackson that day from the Oxford, Ohio, orientation session. Several of us went down to the dull, dirty, Illinois Central Station. As usual, the train was late—15 minutes late. The cops were on time—seven in uniforms and an equal number in plain clothes. We too were on time. So were the local hoodlums. Everybody with an interest in the arrival was there.

Why was the Jackson police force out in such representative numbers to meet the train? To intimidate or to protect? And to protect whom? Doubts were soon removed. One of the nine incoming persons, Stephen Smith, 19, of Marion, Iowa, went to retrieve his bag, which had been placed in the street by persons unknown. Unsuspectingly, he bent over to pick up the bag. A foot slammed into him. His assailant, not satisfied yet, pursued his course. Smith was subjected to smashing blows to the face with fists. Gleefully watching the beating were three, baby-blue-uniform-shirt-wearing members of the Jackson 400-man police force. Taking notes was an FBI agent.

What do I have that I want to keep?

For seven 28-hour-days in Oxford the teachers had been subjected to a well-organized inundation of facts—beyond that of their physical survival—about Mississippi schools, the probable conditions under

which they would teach, the nature of their probable students, and the purposes of the freedom schools. The information flowed into their minds from stacks of mimeographed materials about the condition of the Negro in Mississippi, from lectures from members of the COFO staff, and from interpretations of conditions by Staughton Lynd.

Staughton was the state coordinator of the freedom schools during the first two months of their existence, July and August. The Mississippi power structure might have noted, ominously, that he had an excellent background for the job: he is youngish, frugal, a Quaker, a history professor whose field is the American Revolution. Immediately prior to his assumption of the duties of coordinating the freedom schools, he had spent three years in northern Georgia in a rural cooperative community, followed by three years more at Spelman College, a Negro woman's college in Atlanta. During the spring of 1964 he announced his resignation from Spelman in protest against restrictions on academic freedom of both students and faculty and was immediately recruited to join the faculty of Yale University, a white Ivy League School. During the planning stages, Staughton had been one of the two coordinators. His colleague, a Negro, found himself unable to fulfill his commitment to serve as summer coordinator and fear arrived.

Quickly the future teachers had learned that the best description in one word of Mississippi schools—for both black and white—is “lousy.” They had learned that in Mississippi the counties appropriate funds for education to supplement minimum funds coming from the state government and had looked aghast at such figures as the following for appropriation per pupil:

<i>North Pike County</i> (<i>McComb</i>) (44% non-white)	<i>South Pike County</i> (<i>Magnolia</i>)
white \$30.89	white \$59.55
Negro 00.76	Negro 1.35
<i>Forrest County</i> (28% non-white)	<i>City of Hattiesburg</i>
white \$67.76	white \$115.96
Negro 34.19	Negro 61.69

The freedom-school teachers had been shown information that indicated open hostility to education with such facts as these: 9 counties of the state's 82 counties had no public high schools for either race; to stave off the integration of Ole Miss, the state was willing to close down all colleges—or, if they remained open, to discard their accreditation because the one thing that the state schools existed for in the minds of so many (to provide an athletic program for football and basketball) could go on without any accreditation; in Mississippi a law to require the superintendent of prisons to have a high-school education was not acceptable; and often in the rural schools the students could study astronomy through the holes in the roofs and archaeology through the cracks in the floors.

In Oxford the word had been passed along that many Mississippi teachers had to sign oaths not to participate in civil rights activities, should not attempt to vote (if Negro), could not openly endorse the Republican party (if either white or Negro) and had to teach that slavery was a happy period for Negroes (and superior to their present life) and that the Ku Klux Klan had saved the South from the ravishing hordes of Northerners who had raped white women and stolen the resources of the South.

In other words, they had learned that the closed society that often exists in other parts of the country had become a “locked” society in Mississippi and that, to make sure that it's locked forever, Negro teachers, to maintain jobs, could not permit the classes—many with 50 students in each—to ask questions. Proof of this had been given by the example of the expulsion of Negro students who had raised the question inadvertently of “What about the Freedom Rides?”

Why are we (teacher-student) in a freedom school?

From Staughton Lynd, mimeographed material and the COFO staff, the teachers had been informed that the purpose of the freedom schools “. . . is to provide an educational experience for students which will make it possible for them to challenge the myths of our society, to perceive more clearly its realities, and to find alternatives, and, ultimately, new direction for action.

“The kind of activities you will be developing will fall into three general areas: 1) academic work, 2) recreation and cultural activities, 3) leadership development . . . These three will be integrated into

one learning experience, rather than . . . the kind of fragmented learning and living that characterizes much of contemporary education."

In short, the freedom schools were to develop leaders . . . in a land where such a title can reward one with an early grave . . . as was proven by the *purge* following the 1954 school integration decision of the United States Supreme Court. In response to the decision, school desegregation petitions were filed in 1954 by Negro Mississippians in Jackson, Vicksburg, Yazoo City, Biloxi and other larger Mississippi communities. Where a petition was filed, two things occurred as surely as night followed day: an organizer of the White Citizens Council slithered into town, and a wave of threats, harassment and violence erupted against Negro leaders.

In Brookhaven a Negro was shot on the courthouse steps for attempting to register. In Belzoni economic reprisals caused all but three of the Negro voters to withdraw their names from the voting list. Of the three holdouts, the Rev. George Lee was killed, Gus Courts was shot and left the state, and the third person, Mrs. George Lee, kept her name on the list—but wouldn't take that long march through the valley of death to the polling place.

Finding disfavor in target practice when he was the target, Dr. T. M. Howard of Mount Bayou joined Gus Courts in Chicago, and the screaming silence on the integration front in Mississippi gave mute proclamation that the Citizens Council had used well the time given by a slow, if not indifferent, federal government. On the finger of nubbed hands one could tally the Negro leaders: "Doc" Aaron Henry in Clarksdale, Meryll Lindsey of Holly Springs, the indomitable Amzie Moore of Cleveland, Mississippi, and one or two others. There was little change until 1962, when SNCC blossomed in the state.

Bluntly the teachers had been told that they had about eight weeks to develop those leaders needed and that there'd be no need to search for them; every morning when they said "hello" the leadership potential would be standing there before them. The need was for revolutionary leaders, and attending the freedom schools was an

act of defiance of Mississippi, a state where defiance, by definition, is revolutionary.

The teachers-to-be had been told that most of their students would be from the "block," the "outs" who were not part of the Negro middle class of Mississippi (which is composed primarily of teachers) and who were dissatisfied; and that knowledge abounds in the Negro communities about the subtle forms of ignorance and subservience to the State of Mississippi inflicted in the regular public schools.

From a single-spaced, eight-page, legal-size document headed "Notes on Teaching in Mississippi," the same theme had been pushed over and over again: "The purpose of the freedom schools is to help them begin to question." This was the guideline asserted by Jane Stenbridge (SNCC's executive secretary in 1961), who also sought to answer for the teachers this question: What will the students demand of you?

The answer was this: "They will demand that you be honest. Honesty is an attitude toward life which is communicated by everything you do. Since you, too, will be in the learning situation—honesty means that you will *ask* questions as well as answer them. It means that if you don't know something, you will say so. It means that you will not "act" a part in the attempt to compensate for all they've endured in Mississippi. You can't compensate for that, and they don't want you to try. It would not be *real*, and the greatest contribution that you can make to them is to be real."

Questions constantly asserted themselves as the keys to opening the doors of the closed society in which black and white were not to probe, inquire or challenge. ("It's so because it is so. Your cotton bales came to just \$3.16 less than what you owe for the furnishings I gave you for the year. Nice going.")

This was one question: *What's to be done . . . and who will do it?*

Charles Cobb, SNCC field secretary, hinted at some of the answers when he wrote the following in those same "Notes on Teaching in Mississippi":

Repression is the law; oppression, a way of life—regimented by the judicial and executive branches of the state government, rigidly enforced

by state police machinery, with veering from the path of "our way of life" not tolerated at all. Here, an idea of your own is a subversion that must be squelched; for each bit of intellectual initiative represents the threat of a probe into the way of denial. Learning here means only learning to stay in your place. Your place is to be satisfied—a "good nigger."

They have learned the learning necessary for immediate survival: that silence is safest, so volunteer nothing; that the teacher is the state, and tell them only what they want to hear; that the law and learning are white man's law and learning.

There is hope and there is dissatisfaction—feebly articulated—both born out of the desperation of needed alternatives not given. This is the generation that has silently made the vow of no more raped mothers—no more castrated fathers; that looks for an alternative to a lifetime of bent, burnt, and broken backs, minds and souls. Where creativity must be molded from the rhythm of a muttered "white son-of-a-bitch"; from the roar of a hunger-bloated belly . . .

There is the waiting, not to be taught, but to reach out and meet and join together, and to change. The tiredness of being told it must be, 'cause that's white folks' business, must be met with the insistence that it's their business. They know that anyway. It's because their parents didn't make it their business that they're being so systematically destroyed. What they must see is the link between a rotting shack and a rotting America.

The freedom-school teachers had occasion to consider well these interpretive statements of Charley Cobb, for it was Charley who was the mother-father of the idea of having freedom schools as part of the Mississippi Summer Project. Charley is an SNCC field secretary who has postponed for another year the pursuit of his own college career at Howard University, where his talents as a gifted creative writer were being polished, to remain in Mississippi. He presented the idea of freedom schools to one of the early planning conferences of the Freedom Summer. With the characteristic calm, quiet persistence of those like him who have found internal security in their personal lives by giving them meaning and direction, Charley pushed the idea. It wasn't necessary for him to push too long before Bob Moses and the other staff members were pushing along with him.

Mendy Julius Samstein, another SNCC field secretary, had contributed to the freedom-school notes by detailing some of the prob-

lems of freedom-school teaching. His suggestion had focused on the facts of facilities for the schools: they'll all be *scrounged*, "and if you are white, you will almost certainly be the first white civil rights workers to come to the town to stay. You will need to deal with the problem of your novelty as well as with the educational challenge."

The *words* had been given.

Frightened of life, death, the students, themselves, and every other matter that they could crowd into their concern in the short space allotted between their arrival and the beginning of the schools' tensions, the teachers began their tasks.

It was a hot morning in early July when the freedom schools, the *temple of questions*, opened.

One day that date, July 7, 1964, will be cursed by the power structure of Mississippi and celebrated by the lovers of human dignity as the point of the beginning of the end—the end and the downfall of the empire of Mississippi, the political subdivision, the state that exhibits best the worst found anywhere in America.

As the overly scrubbed, intensely alert and eager students poured into the churches, lodge halls, storefronts, sheds and open fields that served as school facilities, both teachers and students trembled with the excitement of one taking his first trip to the moon. From the beginning, the schools were a challenge to the insistent principle that everyone had talked about so much: flexibility.

Where the initial plans had been for only the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades, one found sitting in the informal circles youngsters with the smooth black faces and wondering eyes of the impish ages of nine and ten who were mere fifth-graders. Flexibility. And there just behind teen-age boys—with slender, cotton-picking muscles—were sets of gnarled hands and the care-chiseled faces of grandmothers, some of whom said they thought they were in the seventies (birth records for the old are almost nonexistent). Flexibility.

Where Tom Wahman and Staughton Lynd had thought that there would be only 20 or so schools to be planned for, 50 of them had sprouted before the end of the summer. Where a mere 1,000 students had been hoped for, 3,000 eventually came.

To meet all these changes and challenges, flexibility became the rigid rule.

While those in charge of coordination and administration worked to resolve the logistical problems of swollen enrollments, the tasks of education proceeded in the first 23 schools to be opened, which were scattered throughout the state in 19 communities: Columbus, West Point, Holly Springs, Greenwood, Holmes County, Ruleville, Bolivar County, Greenville, Clarksdale, Vicksburg, Canton, Madison County, Carthage, Meridian, Hattiesburg, Pascagoula, Moss Point, Gulfport and Laurel.

Happily, the concern about the ability of the rural Negro communities to accept the white teachers readily was a wasted concern. After a day or so and a few touches of the white skin and blond tresses, the white teachers ceased to be "white" in a Mississippi sense. The first-name basis between students and teachers, the obvious sincerity, and the informality of the classroom situation all contributed to the breaking of any barriers that existed and enhanced the learning situation: if there were chairs, they were arranged in circles rather than rows; no one was required to participate in any classroom activity while in class; to go to the toilet or outhouse, one did not need to raise a hand to get permission; not disturbing others was the only consideration requested of the students.

And, most important of all, the teachers asked the students questions and the students talked: the students could and did say what they thought to be important, and no idea was ridiculed or forbidden—an immeasurably traumatic joy for the souls of young black folk.

Almost always there was the push of the students into fields where they could be creative. Where there was a mimeograph machine, weekly newspapers were written, typed and published by the students. Where there was a record player or some musical instrument to be played, assignments were given to describe the sounds in words and even to compose songs and words. Rorschach-like colors were splashed on large sheets of paper to be described from the students' experiences. Class organization was encouraged, with presidents and subofficers to carry out functions within the class and to teach the fundamentals of parliamentary procedures.

Role playing was used extensively. To learn Negro history, the students would portray three generations of Negro families. Often the teachers of history in the freedom schools would begin each day at a point on which it appeared that the students' recognition might fasten long enough to guide them onward rather than to follow a prescribed text. Flexibility was based on the needs of the students.

Contemporary events were utilized to the fullest. For example, newspaper stories, such as the one in the Jackson *Clarion Ledger* asserting that the freedom schools were teaching violation of the law, were used as the basis for civic lessons. Classes, when held out of doors, would sometimes take advantage of the presence of passers-by. One day three Negro ladies trudged by, looking angry and forlorn, on their way back from the courthouse, where they had just learned that their applications for voter registration had been rejected. The teacher called them over to tell what had happened. Thus the students learned of the registration procedures and how to help their parents pass the exams. Flexibility again.

Poems were read, such as Langston Hughes' "Blues":

When the shoestring break
On *both* of your shoes
And you're in a hurry—
That's the blues.

To these poems and others by Frost, Gertrude Stein and e. e. cummings, the students were asked to respond by writing their own poems, which on some occasions created anguishing but vital opportunities for self-exploration. The class situation in Harmony, Mississippi, where Allen Gould, 20, of Detroit, Michigan, a student of Wayne University, used this device, provides an example.

The Negroes of Harmony are a closely knit, fiercely proud group with an above-average number of persons in their midst who own small tracts of land, from which they eke out a living growing cotton and beef cattle. Some 12 miles away is Neshoba County.

Classes were held out of doors. (The community center had not been built at that time.)

Several students read their poems—one was about household chores; another told about the first time the poet had heard the

word "freedom"—and for their originality and ideas the poems received the reward of applause from the class.

Then Ida Ruth Griffin, 13, unlike those before her, decided that she would stand and read her poem. The sun shone on her soft brown face, causing it to glisten. Her eyes sparkled with a deep fire as her voice came forth melodiously and with just a slight dramatic tinge; she read in a slow cadence:

I am Mississippi-fed,
I am Mississippi-bred,
Nothing but a poor, black boy.

I am a Mississippi slave,
I shall be buried in a Mississippi grave,
Nothing but a poor, dead boy.

The rustle of the leaves seemed hushed and the blades of grass appeared to be straining to hear.

She finished.

There was silence, a silence that lingered. The eager young faces grew sullen and flushed with anger as if somehow a scab had been ripped from an old sore or Ida Ruth's poetry had betrayed all that they were learning of denying the myths of Negro inferiority.

On the silence lingered until the floodgates of scorn poured forth from others in the class. In an angry chorus they responded with fierce refutations: "We're not black slaves!"

The teacher, Gould, felt the compelling urge to speak in an effort to save this brown, beautiful and unknown young bard from more verbal attacks, but his tongue was stilled. All along the desire had been to encourage the students to think and to express those thoughts, and expressing opinions often includes speaking opinions other than what a teacher might think.

"She's right," spoke another student, a tall reedy girl with a sharp mind. "We certainly are. Can your poppa vote? Can mine? Can our folks eat anywhere they want to?"

Silence engulfed the class again momentarily, and then everyone began a cacophony of talking and thinking aloud, scattering ideas.

Gould's chest filled with the joy of seeing the sun rising in alert

minds that were heretofore damned by the oppression of conformity.

The black giant was stirring.

And there was more to push the capacity of the students to the outer limits, to make them reach beyond any preguessed borders. The original plans had called for the teaching of only reading, writing, basic mathematics, *revolution* and Negro history. After the first few days of contact, there was expansion to include typing (many of the freedom-school teachers had brought portables), algebra, physics and French.

Imagine students coming to the Mt. Nebo Church in Jackson and being greeted at the door of the classroom by a willowy blonde (5 feet 8 inches, 113 pounds)—Wendy Heil, from a home in Westchester, New York—with the strange words, "Bon jour" . . . and then seeing on the board other strange words: "Nous serons vainqueurs—nous l'affirmons."

For the whole hour there was an intensely exciting challenge between students and teacher as the teacher pointed to herself and said, "Je m'appelle Wendy Heil," and then walked over to a student and asked, "Comment vous appelez-vous?" The joy was electrifying as the first student guessed and replied, "Ida Bell Johnson"! And then from that small beginning, without a word of English during the whole class, Wendy picked up objects, pronounced the French names in exaggerated fashion, and had the students repeat them. Pantomime was used extensively.

The first hour closed with a test: objects were held up and the students recalled the names given earlier and pronounced them in a French laden with a Mississippi drawl.

Then Wendy began giving the pronunciation of the words on the board, "Nous serons vainqueurs," slowly and with repetition until all could give the same pronunciation. Following this, Wendy began humming the tune of "We Shall Overcome," and then she sang the words she had just taught. With unbounded exhilaration of discovery, the students sang, causing the theme song of the Movement, "We Shall Overcome," to reverberate to the sky in a way that it had never done before—in Mississippi French.

The black giant had stirred some more.

The French course (like the arts, crafts and science classes) was symbolic of what the students don't get in all but a few Mississippi high schools and was an adjunct of the basic remedial courses that were such a vital part of the freedom schools: reading, writing and mathematics. More often than not, the students knew no algebra for the reason that they had never been exposed to it. It wasn't taught in their schools. More often than not, the high-school seniors could read on only a fourth- or fifth-grade level. Reading, too, was not *taught* by the teachers in the regular Mississippi schools—who were themselves victims of the state's indifference, which guarantees promotions through grammar school, high school and college merely if the student has another birthday.

Word games, letter games, oral reading, story writing, free access to the odd collection of books which constituted the library possessed by each Freedom School—any device, tactic or trick that would push the students into the use of language was used. And the same was done with numbers. Moreover, to all of this was added individual tutoring. Knowledge-starved minds ravenously gulped in the information—in many instances causing the teachers to spend extra-long hours of preparation in the evenings to insure that the challenge of the students was fully satisfied each day.

As good as the purely academic efforts were, and as desperately needed as they were, the freedom schools were not mere educational feasting tables to supplement the skimpy diet of knowledge of regular schools.

The freedom schools were—and are—a collection of institutions to train leaders, and for that reason approximately half of the average of nine hours spent daily in school was utilized in a *direct* approach to develop Mississippi leaders.

Serving as the basic teaching material for leadership was the *Curriculum Guide for Freedom Schools*, by Noel Day. Out of the need for training material for students attending classes in Boston churches and lodge halls during the boycotts against Boston's token integration, Day had prepared a curriculum; with appropriate adaptations and revisions, this Boston curriculum became the bible for leadership training in Mississippi. This curriculum, in mimeographed form, was divided into seven units:

1. Comparison of the student's reality with that of others (the way the students live and the way others live).
2. North to Freedom? (The Negro in the North.)
3. Examining the apparent reality (the "better lives" that whites live).
4. Introducing the *Power Structure*.
5. The poor Negro and the poor white.
6. Material things versus soul things.
7. The Movement.

Interwoven into Noel Day's freedom-school curriculum were extensive reading and discussion of Negro history and hundreds of questions along the margins for the teachers to ask. Truly the training was a training of questions, because in addition to the questions suggested in each unit of the curriculum there were two additional sets of questions that were to be reintroduced periodically: a "basic set of questions" and a "secondary set of questions."

The basic set was this:

1. Why are we (teachers and students) in freedom school?
2. What is the Freedom Movement?
3. What alternatives does the Freedom Movement offer us?

Undergirding the basic set was this secondary set:

1. What does the majority culture have that we want?
2. What does the majority culture have that we don't want?
3. What do we have that we want to keep?

Relied upon heavily in the first unit, as a comparison with the students' reality, was a mimeographed pamphlet which described analytically the development of Hitler's Germany and the oppression of the Jews as they sought to accommodate themselves to terror. Throughout the unit were questions designed to provoke questions, answers and discussions of similarities in the attitude of the Negro toward the power structure of Mississippi and the attitude and adjustment of the Jews to the power structure of Hitler's Germany. Frightening were the parallels discovered as the teachers and students probed ever deeper with questions, questions, questions, questions.

The "North to Freedom" unit was frankly designed to raise questions and evaluations of whether freedom was north in order that

the students might place the "advantages" of the North in more realistic terms: a place that isn't heaven while not fully like hell (Mississippi). The hope was that the evaluation would cause more of the students to consider remaining in Mississippi instead of dedicating the totality of their beings to flight. (SNCC's statistics show that 54 per cent of the college graduates of Mississippi in 1963 left the state.)

Teachers strove to present the questions and to elicit the answers without denying the basic fact that one means of surviving sometimes is to run away—and that flight does not always show a lack of courage.

Aiding the discussion of this unit during the summer was the eruption of black rebellions in Harlem, Rochester, Jersey City, Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) and other northern communities. Again and again the teachers stressed that part of the basic problem of getting things in the North was that there the Negroes were a minority . . . while in Mississippi, in scores of counties, the Negroes were a majority, constituting nearly half of the state's population.

But there were problems. The freedom-school teachers—mostly Northerners themselves—on one hand were well equipped to describe the ghetto life of northern Negroes; on the other hand these same teachers had stirred the alert and eager minds in the black bodies to challenge, to think and to question. These students knew well that this was a *Summer Project*, that come the fall the teachers would hop on the Illinois Central (Freedom Train) and ride in style across the Ohio River (the Red Sea) to the Promised Land.

In the learning situation the teachers did not coddle or protect the students from facts. For their own comfort, the teachers taught too well or the students learned too much. One student bore into the heart of his teacher: "I believe what you have been trying to say. This is our land. It's worth staying and fighting for. I'm gonna be here when those leaves over yonder are gold. If you believe what you're teaching, where should you be?"

The prison walls crumbled a little more.

The black giant was stirring.

The third unit of the curriculum, through a series of questions,

brought forth how white persons and Negroes lived. One of its primary values was the destruction of the myth that all white people live better than all Negroes. And then the unit took the students further. Most of the teachers were white and from northern suburbia. Analyzing their own lives in the North in the same fashion that life was being analyzed in Mississippi, many of the teachers pointed out the drastic shortcomings of the tension-ridden, insecure life of those "middle class" people (like the teachers' parents) who would have heart attacks if a Jew, Negro or Chinese-American moved into their neighborhoods; who haven't expressed an honest idea in public since the first payment on one of their several mortgages; whose ulcerated, psychotherapied, martini-drenched lives are composed totally of the dearest, sickest fictions that the most successful Madison Avenue huckster can sell in a world tottering on the brink of ultimate destruction.

Then followed the unit on the "Power Structure." Through questions, this unit sought to reformulate the thinking of the students to see who the people are who are the real bosses of the state and the particular county in which the students lived—who are the men who *really* determine whether the Negroes and whites starve, live or die; who manipulate the laws, the courts, the schools. As the discussion progressed, more and more the students changed their language. Instead of the old "the white folks don't want," there was "the power structure has decided." Through this unit the students began to see that friends and foes cannot be determined by skin, that a John Brown is more a friend than a Booker T. Washington.

From their own experiences they discovered what they already knew: that not all white people had a voice in running either the state or the county—that, in fact, there were just a few: the sheriff, the banker, the large-plantation owner, the northern-based corporation owning a local factory.

"The poor Negro and the poor white" unit and the other two were developed by the same method: probing questions that always enlightened—and sometimes hurt.

The "schools of question"—the freedom schools—had as adjuncts 13 community centers throughout the state where there were classes for the very old, for mothers with children, and for preschoolers in

such areas as literacy, art, music, dance, recreation, day care and health. Miss Annell Ponder, Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), field secretary, was the director of the community centers.

Serving in the same adjunct role was the Mississippi Student Union (MSU), which is a state-wide organization of Negro high-school students in the state. It was the convention of the MSU in early August, 1964, which provided an unwanted but crucial test of the effectiveness of the freedom schools in developing leaders with minds that would reach beyond the mental prisons designed by the power structure.

Happily, the freedom schools came out of the testing situation "A-O.K." The MSU-Freedom School Convention in Meridian, Mississippi, on August 6, 7, 8, after a lot of heated wrangling over wording and the blessed chaos of exuberance of souls that have but moments ago broken their chains, the backward, dull, imbecilic, slothful Mississippi students—according to the myths of the society—issued the following proclamations to Mississippi, the nation and the world:

PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

1. We resolve that the Public Accommodations and Public Facilities sections of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 be enforced.
2. We demand new and better recreation facilities for all.
3. We support the right of the Negro people and their white supporters to test the Civil Rights Act via demonstrations such as sit-ins. We are not urging a bloodbath through this means; we are simply demanding our Constitutional right to public assembly and seeking to test the Federal government's position.
4. Conversion of public accommodations into private clubs should be treated as a violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

HOUSING

The home, being the center of a child's life as well as the center of a family's, must have certain facilities in order for it to be a home and not just a building in which one eats, sleeps, and prepares to leave for the rest of the day.

Therefore, be it resolved:

1. That there be an equal-opportunity-to-buy law which permits all

- persons to purchase a home in any section of town in which he can afford to live.
2. That a rent control law be passed and that one should pay according to the condition of the house.
 3. That a building code for home construction be established which includes the following minimum housing requirements:
 - a. a complete bathroom unit
 - b. a kitchen sink
 - c. a central heating system
 - d. insulated walls and ceiling
 - e. a laundry room and pantry space
 - f. an adequate wiring system providing for at least three electrical outlets in the living room and kitchen and at least two such outlets in the bedroom and bathroom
 - g. at least a quarter of an acre of land per building lot
 - h. a basement and attic
 4. That zoning regulations be enacted and enforced to keep undesirable and unsightly industries and commercial operations away from residential neighborhoods.
 5. That slums be cleared, and a low-cost federal housing project be established to house these people.
 6. That federal aid be given for the improvement of houses, with long-term, low-interest loans.
 7. That the federal government provide money for new housing developments in the state. Anyone could buy these houses with a down payment and low monthly rate. There must be absolutely no discrimination. The federal government should take action if this law is not complied with.
 8. That a federal law make sure that the projects are integrated and that they are run fairly.
 9. That there be lower taxes on improvements in the houses so that more people will fix up their homes.
 10. That the federal government buy and sell land at low rates to people who want to build homes.

EDUCATION

In an age where machines are rapidly replacing manual labor, job opportunities and economic security increasingly require higher levels of education. We therefore demand:

1. Better facilities in all schools. These would include textbooks, laboratories, air conditioning, heating, recreation, and lunch rooms.
2. A broader curriculum including vocational subjects and foreign languages.
3. Low-fee adult classes for better jobs.

4. That the school year consist of nine (9) consecutive months.
5. Exchange programs and public kindergartens.
6. Better-qualified teachers with salaries according to qualification.
7. Forced retirement (women at 62, men at 65).
8. Special schools for mentally retarded and treatment and care of cerebral palsy victims.
9. That taxpayers' money not be used to provide private schools.
10. That all schools be integrated and equal throughout the country.
11. Academic freedom for teachers and students.
12. That teachers be able to join any political organization to fight for Civil Rights without fear of being fired.
13. That teacher brutality be eliminated.

HEALTH

1. Each school should have fully-developed health, first aid, and physical education programs. These programs should be assisted by at least one registered nurse.
2. Mobile units, chest X rays semiannually and a check-up at least once a year by licensed doctors, the local health department or a clinic should be provided by the local or state government.
3. All medical facilities should have both integrated staff and integrated facilities for all patients.
4. Mental health facilities should be integrated and better staffed.
5. Homes for the aged should be created.
6. Free medical care should be provided for all those who are not able to pay the cost of hospital bills.
7. We demand state and local government inspection of all health facilities.
8. All doctors should be paid by skill, not by race.
9. Titles should be given to the staff.
10. The federal government should help the organization pay the salaries of workers.
11. All patients should be addressed properly.
12. We actively seek the abolition of any sterilization act which serves punishment, voluntary or involuntary, for any offense.
13. In a reasonable time we seek the establishment of a center for the treatment and care of cerebral palsy victims.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. The United States should stop supporting dictatorships in other countries and should support that government which the majority of the people want.
2. Whereas the policy of apartheid in the Republic of South Africa is detrimental to all the people of that country and against the concepts of

Freedom Schools

- equality and justice, we ask that the United States impose economic sanctions in order to end this policy.
3. We ask that there be an equitable balance between the domestic and foreign economic and social support provided by our country.

FEDERAL AID

1. We demand that a public works program be set up by the federal government to create jobs for the unemployed.
2. Because of discrimination in the past, we demand preferential treatment for the Negro in the granting of federal aid in education and training programs until integration is accomplished.
3. To help fight unemployment, we demand that federal funds be lent communities to set up industries and whole towns which shall be publicly owned by the communities. For example: textile and paper mills, stores, schools, job relocation programs for those put out of work by automation, job retraining centers, recreational facilities, banks, hospitals.
4. We demand that Social Security benefits should be given according to need and not according to how much one earned previously. In addition, we demand guaranteed income of at least \$3,000 annually for every citizen.
5. The federal government should give aid to students who wish to study for the professions and who do not have the necessary funds.
6. We feel that federal aid in Mississippi is not being distributed equally among the people. Therefore we adopt Title VI of the Civil Rights Law which deals with federal aid. We demand federal agents appointed to Mississippi expressly for this purpose. We demand that action be taken against the State of Mississippi so that this aid may be distributed fairly.
7. We demand that the federal government divert part of the funds now used for defense into additional federal aid appropriations.
8. We demand that the federal government refuse to contract with corporations that employ nonunion labor, engage in unfair labor practices, or practice racial discrimination.

JOB DISCRIMINATION

1. We demand: That the federal government immediately open to Negroes all employment opportunities and recruitment programs under its auspices, such as in post offices, Veterans Hospitals and defense bases.
2. That the fair employment section (Title VII) of the 1964 Civil Rights Law be immediately and fully enforced.
3. The guarantee of fair employment be extended fully to all aspects of labor, particularly job training programs.
4. We encourage the establishment of more unions in Mississippi, to attract more industry to the state.
5. We will encourage and support more strikes for better jobs and

adequate pay. During the strikes the employers should be enjoined from having others replace the striking workers.

6. Vocational institutions must be established for high-school graduates and dropouts.

7. The federal minimum wage law be extended to include *all* workers, especially agricultural and domestic workers.

8. Cotton planting allotments to be made on the basis of family size.

9. We want an extension of the Manpower Retraining program.

10. Whenever a factory is automated, management must find new jobs for the workers.

11. Workers should be paid in accordance with their qualifications and the type of work done.

THE PLANTATION SYSTEM

1. The federal government should force plantation owners to build and maintain fair tenant housing.

2. In cases where the plantation farmers are not being adequately paid according to the Minimum Wage Law, the government should intervene on behalf of the farmers in a suit against the plantation owner.

CIVIL LIBERTIES

1. Citizens of Mississippi should be entitled to employ out-of-state lawyers.

2. Section Two of the Fourteenth Amendment should be enforced, specifically in Mississippi and other Southern States, until the voter registration practices are changed.

3. The citizens should have the privilege of exercising their Constitutional rights

a. to assemble,

b. to petition,

c. to freedom of the press,

d. to freedom of speech

in such ways as picketing, passing out leaflets and demonstrations. We oppose all laws that deprive citizens of the above rights.

4. We want the abolition of the House Un-American Activities Committee because it deprives citizens of their Constitutional rights.

5. We resolve that the Freedom Movement should accept people regardless of religion, race, political views or national origin if they comply with the rules of the movement.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

1. We want qualified Negroes appointed to the police force in large numbers. We want them to be able to arrest anyone breaking the law, regardless of race, creed or color.

2. All police must possess warrants when they demand to enter a house and search the premises. In the absence of a search warrant, the police must give a reasonable explanation of what they are looking for. In any case, with or without a warrant, no damage should be done unnecessarily to property, and if damage is done, it should be paid for.

3. A national committee should be set up to check police procedures, to insure the safety of people in jail: their food, sleeping and health facilities; to protect them from mobs and see that no violence is done to them.

4. All cases against law enforcement agencies or involving civil rights should be tried in federal courts.

5. Law enforcement officials should provide protection against such hate groups as the KKK. Police and public officials should not belong to any group that encourages or practices violence.

CITY MAINTENANCE

1. The city should finance paving and widening of the streets and installing of drain systems in them.

2. Sidewalks must be placed along all paved streets.

3. A better system of garbage disposal, including more frequent pickups, must be devised.

4. Streets should be adequately lighted.

5. We oppose nuclear testing in residential areas.

VOTING

1. The poll tax must be eliminated.

2. Writing and interpreting of the Constitution is to be eliminated.

3. We demand further that registration procedures be administered without discrimination, and that all intimidation of prospective voters be ended through federal supervision and investigation by the FBI and Justice Department.

4. We want guards posted at ballot boxes during counting of votes.

5. The minimum age for voting should be lowered to 18 years.

6. We seek for legislation to require the county registrar or one of his deputies to keep the voter registration books open five days a week except during holidays, and open noon hours and early evening so that they would be accessible to day workers. Registrars should be required by law to treat all people seeking to register equally.

DIRECT ACTION

1. To support Ruleville, we call for a state-wide school demonstration, urging teachers to vote and asking for better, integrated schools.

2. We support nonviolence, picketing and demonstrations.

With all of its rawness and ugliness, there is something about Mississippi and the South that "hooks" you.

After a lifetime—be it short or long—of being convinced by your surroundings that you aren't anything more than an insignificant, selfish, parasitic bug among millions of other similar bugs called humans, the experience of being in the South and being creative—and seeing your little efforts aid in the qualitative changes in the lives of warm, lovable humans willing to tackle the massive problems that you and your kind have avoided facing—makes you feel traumatically and suddenly as if your life has real meaning so long as it is in this sort of setting and you are doing this sort of work: saving yourself and your society (the good part of it) by helping others save themselves.

"Am I a 'summer soldier'?" the summer volunteer had to ask himself as the days in August spent themselves toward an end. "What about all the threats I've heard from the power structure which have sullied my ears, such as, 'We'll take care of the niggers when y'all gone.?"

What's the answer to the challenge of the students who have said, "I'm gonna be here when those leaves over yonder are gold. If you believe what you're teaching, where should you be?"

Those who came to teach were taught.

Nearly 300 of the 800 *summer* volunteers dropped the adjective; they became *volunteers* and remained in Mississippi and saw the beautiful foliage of the vast virgin forest land turn brown and gold.

Staughton Lynd and Tom Wahman moved on to their obligations at Yale and New York universities, respectively. Into the vacated position of freedom-school coordinator moved Mrs. Liz Fusco, who had been in charge of the Indianola freedom schools during the summer.

Mrs. Fusco is a "mite" of a woman, about five feet tall and nearly 100 pounds, whose beautiful face and soft, long, dark-brunette hair enhance the impression she gives of being a hummingbird as she flits about doing four things at once. To the amazement of less artistic souls in the Movement, she has every office in the state decorated with art from the freedom schools and eagerly displays the poetry and writing of one of her 2,000 students around the

state, which she has picked up during one of the incessant trips she has been taking—everywhere—since September. There's a bit of incongruity about it all for the unprepared stranger. Though coordinator of the year-round freedom schools that wouldn't let the summer end, she looks not a bit of her 20-odd years and easily would be mistaken for a high-school senior in her teens who was a bit precocious.

Even the most casual look at a report prepared for the end of September shows that all the activity on her part is provoked by busy circumstances:

FREEDOM CENTERS—WHAT'S HAPPENING

Sept., 1964

1. *Mark's*: Regular schools are on split session for cotton picking. The freedom school is teaching the regular curriculum of Mississippi 1964 and Negro history, etc., and some algebra, in the evenings. They are trying to get a place for a community center. Four high school kids from the Mississippi Student Union went to register in the white school.

2. *Mound Bayou*: Project director John Bradford is conducting classes in local government. Classes meet every evening:

Monday—voter registration education

Tuesday—welfare and community improvement

Wednesday—an executive committee of 10 or 12 adults

Thursday—local government

Friday—songs

Every Wednesday there is an MSU [Mississippi Student Union] meeting, at which there is both planning for direct action and discussion of Negro history.

3. *Ruleville*: Kindergarten in the daytime, high school and adults in the evenings. Extensive use of library.

The little kids have mornings of free play, singing, games, stories, acting of nursery rhymes, nature walks, simple dances, basic carpentry.

The adults meet two nights a week for reading and discussion. The MSU kids hold Sunday-afternoon meetings instead of Saturday-night dances, then refreshments.

4. *Holly Springs*: There are two freedom schools in Benton County, even though the kids are picking cotton. Classes in voter registration and Negro history are going on. Next door to the one school is a community center, which the teen-age girls are staffing for library and TV in the evenings. *There is a nurse in Holly Springs.*

5. *Itta Bena*: Just getting started. On Tuesday evenings people come over from Greenwood to teach voter registration to the adults.

6. *Meridian*: Good integration of freedom school and community center activities: a theater group, citizenship seminars, book discussion, individual tutorial, etc. There is a sculptor there who will be traveling around the state, spending about two or three weeks in each project; under his direction the kids are doing "wild sculpturing."

7. *Greenwood*: Tutorial every afternoon 3:30-6, 10 students. On Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights a college prep course: reading comprehension, vocabulary drill, novels (this week, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*). Six kids, perhaps more soon. There is a local lady who has been running a kindergarten for years. Study hall. The staff has had communication teachers at the high school.

Greenwood has tapes: from KPFA in California: lectures by Baldwin, Lomax, and speeches by King and by professors of history and political science. 708 Ave. N.

8. *Indianola*: Day program for little kids: reading and writing, African dancing, geography, Negro history and science. Library. Evening program for adults and teen-agers.

9. *Cleveland*: The MSU is active in school, refusing by letter to raise money by the campus queen drive. Talking about eating in public places and boycotting stores.

10. *Tupelo*: No place to have classes, but there is some teaching going on in private homes.

11. *Natchez*: Strong MSU, tutoring, discussion, newspaper.

12. *Moss Point*: MSU working on school integration and the petition part of the groundwork for the state-wide Freedom Study Day (alias boycott). (sic)

13. *Biloxi*: All of the staff is working on building a new community center and the library and new office. The adult Nonviolent Action Association (12 members) is working to raise funds and to feed the workers.

14. *McComb*: Afterschool tutoring, 4-6. Weekend classes Saturday and Sunday, 4-6, combination of American politics, problems of civil rights movement (FDP as solution?), world history, current events (focusing on the election). Adult evening classes in citizenship. Library.

15. *Canton*: The community center is open with a full recreation program every night and games on the weekend. Library and reading program, study hall planned, perhaps tutorial.

16. *Belzoni*: Just getting started, has no place. The MSU is meeting.

17. *Columbus*: The Young Democrat Club (alias MSU) is writing letters to Congressmen in addition to working out grievances against the schools. Most of the summer's FS kids are on the football team or in the band.

18. *Greenville*: Tutorials, literacy work in homes. Action against the

city's new school regulations: entrance fee raised to \$3.50, special fee for kids not living with natural parents, refusal of admission to girls who are pregnant or who have children.

19. *Hattiesburg*: Community centers are open or about to open, with plans for one in each area: local people working, day care and recreation center at Palmer's Crossing.

20. *Tchula*: In process of building new community center. Freedom-school staff mostly in jail.

21. *Philadelphia*: Library functioning well; voter registration classes and expectation of beginning regular classes as soon as cotton picking is over.

22. *Clarksdale*: Study hall every day 4-9 P.M., individual tutorials.

23. *Aberdeen*: The basis for a freedom school in 10-15 kids hanging around.

24. *Shaw*: Citizenship classes for adults. ADULTS and kids very active in MSU-type action with regard to the schools—kids have decided to go back to school October 1 even though their demands weren't met, in anticipation of the state-wide action.

25. *Holmes County*: Adopted by Iowa communities, working on literacy. Local participation in new community center is county-wide!

Figures released by the United States Civil Rights Commission in 1964 showed that 98.5 per cent of the Negro students in the South were in segregated schools. This figure screams that something fundamental is wrong. In 1964, ten years had passed since the United States Supreme Court had mandated the end of school segregation.

Figures for the North for the same year provide no comfort. Something more than 70 per cent of all the Negro students in the North were in racially segregated schools.

In the South and in Mississippi the segregated school means that the worst of what the community has to offer will be typified by the Negro schools. There is no difference in the North.

In the South and Mississippi the Negro student is oppressed and stifled. For similar and slightly different reasons, the Negro student in a Chicago school is treated the same.

Freedom schools were, and are, needed in Philadelphia, Mississippi . . . and its northern namesake. And wasn't the basic curriculum that worked so well in Mississippi born of the school boycott led by Noel Day against token integration of the Boston

schools? There is no need to pile on the evidence by citing Harlem, Detroit, Los Angeles, St. Louis and other cities.

The fact that the schools of northern communities differ only in a matter of degree from those in southern communities is neither a secret fact nor a newly discovered fact. Mississippi didn't create an awareness of the problem; what the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964 gave America was an awareness of a solution.

Optimism about the freedom schools is well supported: 1,000 students were hoped for in Mississippi and 3,000 came; the schools were conceived of as a six-to-eight-week effort; they are in fact as permanent as the Movement and a desire for a better life.

Comparison with the growth of the Catholic Church in America reveals part of the potential of the system of freedom schools in Mississippi.

In 200 years the Roman Catholic Church increased from the smallest to the largest church in the nation, claiming some 40,000,000 adherents, or one-fifth of the total population of America. Although as late as 1908 the Catholic Church of America was still of only missionary status, it is now the most powerful branch of the faith. And the single most important factor in this amazing pace of growth has been the system of parochial schools.

Both the freedom schools and the parochial schools teach the four "R's." Parochial schools teach reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic and religion. Freedom schools teach reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic and *revolution*. The growth of the parochial schools was enhanced by the dedication of those taking the vows of the religious orders for poverty. Vows are not taken in the Movement, but ends up impoverished.

The Mississippi freedom schools are demonstrating what can be done; and if the problems of oppressive, inferior education—to insure the disinheriting of the disinherited—can be wrestled with in Mississippi and headed in the right direction, who is there to say that it can't be done in Cleveland, Ohio, and elsewhere?

The freedom schools crassly call liars those who say that nothing can be done until the government acts. Had you been a student at one of those freedom schools, you would have learned why the gov-

RIGHTS WORKERS PLANNING FOR '65

Student Movement to Stress Poverty in the North

By FRED POWLEDGE

A group of young civil rights activists are making plans for a comprehensive program in two Northern states next summer. The program would be modeled in many ways on last summer's Mississippi civil rights campaign.

William Strickland, the executive director of the Northern Student Movement, said yesterday that the summer program would not involve Negroes alone, but would seek to "organize people around poverty."

Mr. Strickland, a 27-year-old Negro who majored in psychology at Harvard, is representative of a large number of young persons in the civil rights movement who feel that, in his words, "Integration is no longer the issue. The issue is poverty."

An estimated 300 young persons from the North, most of them college students, started on Friday a weekend conference sponsored by the Northern Student Movement at Columbia University. The conference was expected to produce some details of the projected Northern summer campaign.

Mr. Strickland said two states had been selected for intensive organizing, one in the Midwest and one in the Northeast, but that they probably would not

be identified until the end of the year.

He said the projects would include attempts to set up community centers, operated by and for "the inhabitants of the ghetto; "tutorial projects for the inhabitants who need them, and possibly rent strikes.

"Ultimately," he said in an interview, "the problem of poverty is a political problem, and it can only be dealt with by the political organization of the poor. We hope that the program will result in some political organization, too."

Would Combine Efforts

Mr. Strickland said the Mississippi experience showed that small, city-wide efforts to bring change were not very effective against ingrown traditions and discrimination. It is the thinking of the student movement now, he said, that seven or eight cities in each of the two states should put their efforts together.

In the Mississippi Freedom Summer project, which was led by a coalition of young civil rights workers, "Freedom schools" were established, voter registration was attempted, and a challenge to the state's all-white Democratic party was carried before the eyes of the nation at the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City.

The Northern Student Movement was begun in 1961 as a Northern fund-raising arm of the Southern-based Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. The group maintains 73 affiliates on Northern campuses. Mr. Strickland estimated that 3,000 to 4,000 persons were involved in its work.

The New York Times, Sunday, November 1, 1964.

ernment hasn't acted: the power structure of our community wants things as they are.

To those who have listened—and there have been many—the freedom schools have said that those in the leadership of our communities are there because those with power in the community have placed them there. Any organization of the millions in the slums of the North would realign power, and power would have to be shared with people who aren't *fit*. So it's best that the sleeping and unorganized giants in the North remain just that way—sleeping and unorganized—with escape for only the lucky or the exceptional.

Howard Zinn (SNCC adviser, Boston University professor and eminent author) poses a question for America as penetrating as any asked in the Mississippi freedom schools as a result of his observations of their operation in Mississippi:

Is there, in the floating, prosperous, nervous, American social order of the sixties, a national equivalent to the excitement of the civil rights Movement, one strong enough in its pull to create a motivation for learning that even the enticements of monetary success cannot match?

Would it be possible to declare boldly that the aim of the schools is to find solutions for poverty, for injustice and for race and national hatred, and to turn all educational efforts into a national striving for these solutions?

To answer these questions "YES" by many is considered too dangerous. We must also ask ourselves this: Is there any state where the disinherited, realizing that it is they, more than anyone else, who must force the changes in the conditions of their disinheritment—as has been started in Mississippi—would not alter the status of things as they are within the political machinery of those states?

No.

Not yet.

Nevertheless, the fact of the freedom schools started people thinking—white as well as black—and it occurred to some, quite logically, that the next step up might well be organizational work among the white people of the state as well.

VII

"White Folks" Project

I'm tempted to thank God for being white.

But I hesitate.

I'm neither proud of myself

Or our society which forces such a temptation on me

—and gives so little in return.

—*The Wisdom of Dawley*

NOTE: *To protect people and places from reprisals, some names and locations have been disguised. The events described are true.*

ONE AUGUST MORNING IN 1964 two casually dressed fellows in their twenties, each with leaflets and Freedom Registration forms rolled into a baton in one hand, crossed a street in the Point Cadet section of Biloxi, Mississippi.

Stepping sprightly and forcing themselves to appear nonchalant in spite of the feeling that hundreds of hostile eyes were piercing their backs, they walked up on the porch of the first house. It was a wooden frame building whose ancient coat of paint had long since surrendered to the salty air blowing from the Gulf waters a few blocks away.

Like the other homes in this all-white, low-income neighborhood, this first building seemed tired and brooding from the tropical heat as its drabness contrasted with the brightness of the wild red and orange flowers growing untended in the yard. In this area lived mostly seasonal workers from the shrimp and oyster boats

as well as those who eked out a living working as guides, laborers, maintenance men and taxi drivers serving the tourist business.

The taller of the two young men, Kirk Morris, knocked at the door, fidgeted uncomfortably, rubbed his right forearm where his white skin had reddened from a painful sunburn, and pushed from his face a lock of wild blond hair which had resisted the intimidation of the combing given shortly before he'd left the Biloxi SNCC headquarters.

His co-worker, Paul Dumas, smiled at their nervousness. Both sweated. The leaves of the palm trees across the street were motionless; no breeze stirred in the 90-degree heat.

Heavy footsteps approached the door from the inside. The door opened. The two saw standing in front of them a barefoot man in his forties, with thinning black hair, a pockmark-grated face, and slender arms that told of his outdoor work by their crimson color, which ended where a shirt had protected him from the poaching rays of the sun.

There was silence.

The occupant of the house stared, and his blue eyes grew wider in disbelief. It was as if one answered his door one morning to find a nude woman standing there selling *Liberator* magazines.

Paul Dumas was the cause.

His smooth black skin, tapered muscular limbs and unconsciously perfect posture as he stood at the doorway to the house was not an acceptable event in this neighborhood, where even the garbage collectors were white.

The tenant of the house gulped, almost swallowing the golf-ball-size wad of chewing tobacco which distended his jaw. "Well, come in," he said.

The canvassing team entered the house, introduced themselves, but made no offer to shake hands because their befuddled host's hand had not been held out.

The dialogue began. Both fellows, though from states farther north, spoke in a rural cadence with deliberation; they didn't want to use any "big word" that might not be understood or might

alienate this man whose education appeared to be "Mississippi-bad" (poor even by Mississippi standards).

Their host spoke in a drawl as thick as the good oyster stew so common in this area of oyster fishermen.

"How come you Freedom Riders are coming in here?" the man asked, full of curiosity.

"We aren't Freedom Riders. We're seeing folks like you to get them on the side of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party," Kirk Morris said.

"Well, we ain't had no trouble with niggers around here. Everything is fine. We're not worried about them."

Calmly, Paul Dumas replied to this, saying, "We're not talking about Negro problems. We're trying to organize a new political party which will do something about getting some better streets, stronger labor unions, and some federal programs to help people who need jobs."

"Well, you're going to have niggers in this, aren't you?"

"Yes, there'll be Negroes," Kirk said. "We want everybody having the same problems to work together. And if they need jobs, we want everybody who needs a job to get one. If the problem is schools, we want everybody who needs an education to have a chance to go to schools. We feel that the Mississippi schools are bad because the state is poor and got two sets of schools going."

"I don't see nothing wrong with our schools."

"Let me ask you something," Dumas said as he came back into the dialogue. "You know that oil refinery that Standard Oil opened over in Pascagoula. They're bringing in a bunch of people from California to work in that plant. Here you got jobs paying three and four dollars an hour and the company can't find people from local schools able to do the work. So they bring folks from other places who went to good schools to get those jobs. You and I know that folks around here should have the learning for those jobs. Don't we need them more than the people in California?"

The host nodded in agreement. Sensing that his Negro co-worker had developed a rapport, Kirk Morris let the two of them do the rest

of the talking. The subject shifted to getting a signature on the Freedom Registration.

"What help are you getting now from the regular Democrats?" Paul asked rhetorically.

The host became defensive. "Well, all politicians are no good. None of them do anything. One set is as bad as another," the host said.

"Wait a minute. There's a 5-cent sales tax. When we buy two dollars' worth of groceries, we've gotta pay ten cents in taxes. What kinda jobs, schools and highways are we getting for this?"

The conversation went on for nearly an hour. The civil rights workers pressed for a signature without seeming "pushy." They explained in detail that the Freedom Democratic Party was not the "nigger party" but the party for people like their host, who weren't really represented by the regular Democrats; that things were bad for all people in Mississippi because of the indifference of the politicians; and that Negroes and "thinking white people like yourself" have to change things.

The civil rights workers left the house exchanging smiles and well-wishes with the host, who hadn't signed but had said, "I'll think it over 'bout a week. If'n you around here then, stop and I'll let you know."

A point had been proved. Integrated teams could canvass in white neighborhoods in Mississippi.

Systematically other houses in the same block were approached, but not all people welcomed the teams that were integrated. Nor were the strictly white pairs of canvassers welcomed at every door in Biloxi. For three weeks, a dozen or so persons, in integrated and nonintegrated teams, canvassed in the poor white neighborhoods of the city. At worst they were told to leave. At best they were offered some beverage—soft or hard—and talked with for as long as two hours in some homes. There was no kicking down the steps or threats of violence anywhere. Almost everywhere there was curiosity . . . even when there were situations of "racial baiting."

For example, a team of canvassers consisting of a fellow and a girl was invited into a home where the first statement the man

said was this: "I've been a member of the Ku Klux Klan for years. What do you have to say about that?" Since the man and his wife showed an undertone of curiosity, the two summer volunteers "played it cool" and kept talking without accepting his challenges to argue. After 15 minutes the team announced that it was leaving. The white man closed the conversation on the same tone that it had begun.

"You people are a bunch of damned fools. You don't understand Mississippi." The team had walked out of the house and was beyond the picket fence of the well-kept lawn when the supposed Klan member called out: "Hey! Wait a minute!" They stopped. The Klan member picked a bouquet of red and yellow roses from the flower garden and gave them to the girl summer volunteer. "Good luck. But I still think you're crazy," he told them as the girl thanked him for the unsolicited kindness.

This grass-roots political action of going to homes was new to Mississippi, so new that many of the people contacted in the white neighborhoods didn't know what the word "canvassing" meant—causing the summer volunteers to abandon its use. From three weeks of this kind of effort (from the first week of August, 1964, until time to leave for the National Democratic Convention in Atlantic City, which began on August 22), the White Community Project could show several achievements:

1. Twenty members of the white community of Biloxi had signed the Freedom Registration forms. These forms merely contained basic information about name, age, residence and how long the person has lived in the state. Persons all over the state, both black and white, were signing these forms, in part to show that they felt that their interests were not being represented by the controlling Democratic Party.

By non-Mississippi standards, the figure 20 does not sound impressive. But in Mississippi it's phenomenal. It increased the number of white persons in the state *openly* supporting the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party from approximately 2 persons (the Rev. and Mrs. Edwin King of Tougaloo College) to 22.

2. The "White Folks" Project recruited in those three weeks two

additional Mississippi white persons, who got involved in full, *open* commitment to the Mississippi Freedom Movement: Robert Williams and his wife Lois from Biloxi. Williams was a thing of beauty to see in his blunt, lovable rawness when representatives of the Biloxi power structure tried to frighten him. A policeman awesomely and belligerently asked him, "What do you think you are?" And Williams replied, "A goddamned Freedom Fighter!" A high city official asked him, "How'd you feel if somebody blew your head off?" And Williams stormed out, slamming the office door, after promising, "About the same way you'll feel when my buddies get the bastard who did it."

Robert Williams was among the 68 delegates of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party who challenged the seating of the regular Democrats at the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City in August, 1964.

Liz Khrona, a summer volunteer working in the Biloxi White Community Pilot Project, is immodest in her praise of Williams: "Six more like him in Mississippi and the state would move into the category of magnificent."

3. Theory was proven. The integrated teams of canvassers in the white community proved what few believed and most doubted: that a Negro could work among white persons in Mississippi as hundreds of white persons had worked among Negroes for the Freedom Movement. In many ways the reports from the pilot project showed that canvassing was more effective when integrated teams did it. There was less of the charges of "communist" by those being canvassed, and the dialogue was refreshingly healthier as many of the white persons talked *with* a Negro for the first time in their lives rather than *at* him. The importance of this arises from the fact that SNCC insists that the organization of white persons in Mississippi take place in a setting which emphasizes the problems of the disinherited of both races.

4. Myths were disproven. The poor white Mississippian is mostly conceived of in demonic terms: "The red-necked cracker with spittle streaming down his jaw, a gun in his pocket and a lynch rope on his shoulder." But they are warm humans whose stomachs

ache when they aren't fed, who bleed when they are cut, whose souls thirst for a better life for themselves and those they love. The meaningfulness of this "discovery" can be appreciated only in the context of the moving force of the stereotype which makes the poor white cracker the enemy, the person whose proximity to you causes the adrenal glands to flow and your reaction to be like that of cattle when their nostrils gulp in the whiff of a hungry jackal pack.

Intellectually, few persons in the Movement accept the stereotype of the poor white man of the South feverishly boiling in a caldron of his own hate. Psychologically, the results are somewhat different. The experiences of the "White Folks" Project in Biloxi provided experiences which helped the *intellectual* to become also the *emotional* attitude.

In other words, the experiences provided an opportunity to know on a deeper level that the stereotype of the poor white man was as "accurate" as the stereotype of the Negro.

5. Insight was gained as to the desires and needs of poor white persons. The canvassing and its resulting discussions revealed that there was dissatisfaction. Better schools, more jobs, health facilities, stronger unions, and cooperatives were among the things for which the white disinherited of Biloxi longed.

The summer volunteers talked with them about how to fulfill the desire to reorganize the fishermen's union, which had been disbanded for illegal price-fixing and whose treasurer had run off with the money. The fishermen with whom they talked wanted an oyster cooperative. The fishermen get about \$2 per gallon of unopened oysters, and restaurants sell them opened for \$6 and \$7 per gallon. Large factories in the area have machines that do the opening and get a large portion of the profit from the oyster fishing by serving as the middlemen. The fishermen want the cooperative in order to employ their wives and to become their own "middlemen." And such a project could work, because the hand-opened oysters command a better price than the machine-opened ones.

Community centers, freedom schools and voter education were all found to be things that the poor whites of the community

desired. In short, the efforts in Biloxi removed any thoughts in the Mississippi Freedom Movement that there were a large number of persons in the state—with white skins—who were something less than human.

There's a familiar sociological idea that groups are more immoral than individuals, and the experiences of those organizing in Biloxi supported this sociological idea. The absence of open hostility except from officials of the city and the lack of blind submission to the "Southern Line" about civil rights by most of the individuals contacted—who were some of the same people who attacked Negroes with chains at a beach wade-in during the summer of 1960 and spent several days shooting up Negro homes as an aftermath—were shocking.

Comparison of the three-week experiences and gains of the White Community Project which went into Biloxi "cold" (without a local person to open doors and arrange contacts) with similar efforts in all Negro situations in Mississippi places the pilot project in the category of exceptional. In some "Negro" situations it has taken four and five months to achieve similar results.

The exploration of the possibilities of organizing white people during the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964 was consistent with the history of SNCC. It was almost inevitable.

When SNCC was formed in 1960, it was a campus-based civil rights organization with primary emphasis on organizing southern Negro college students for racial protests. At the suggestion of Jane Stembridge (a southern white coed, who was SNCC's executive secretary in 1961) and Anne Braden (editor of the *Southern Patriot* and one of the South's leading white integrationists) and with a grant from the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF), SNCC employed a southern white college student, Robert Zellner, to travel around the South, organizing white students for the integration drive.

In the fall of 1963, Zellner enrolled in Brandeis University's graduate school and was succeeded by Sam Shirah. At this point SNCC's efforts had changed from organizing students on campuses to organizing Negro field hands in cotton fields; it had gone from the schools to the community.

Sam Shirah pushed the idea that just as SNCC had shifted its main thrust from organizing Negro schools to organizing Negro communities, he ought to shift from organizing southern white students to southern white communities. His idea was readily accepted.

With encouragement from Bayard Rustin and Anne Braden and more encouragement and some personnel from the newly organized Southern Students Organizing Conference (SSOC), the idea was implemented as part of the Mississippi Summer Project.

Except for Sam Shirah, none of the 25 white summer volunteers and staff—most of whom were Southerners—had had any previous experience in organizing. Seven of the volunteers were assigned to four communities—Jackson, Greenville, Meridian and Vicksburg—where they helped the local human-relations councils and committees to save public education. School integration was imminent for Mississippi in the fall of 1964, and there was assiduous talk of closing the schools rather than allowing them to be integrated.

In these four communities the work of the volunteers consisted, for the most part, of mailing literature that explained to the business and professional groups of the communities the role and function of the Mississippi Summer Project, which had been widely misinterpreted by the news media of Mississippi in scare stories. Considerable literature was also mailed to encourage keeping the schools open and avoiding violence in connection with those integrated school openings. Some personal visitations were made to ministers and persons suspected of having "liberal" thinking.

The bulk of the volunteers, 18 persons (5 girls and 13 boys), were concentrated in Biloxi. Not knowing what to expect and having no contacts, the group arrived in the city on July 1, 1964, unencumbered by any rigid plans or programs. They were feeling their way. Ed Hamlett, who was the ostensible leader of the group, was strongly persuaded that efforts ought to be concentrated on building contacts with the white ministers, businessmen and professional persons. With some misgivings on the part of two-thirds of the group, the efforts were begun. Over 30 ministers in Biloxi were reached by visiting teams. Others in the professional class were also contacted. The results were devoid of encouragement.

"Seems that the scariest white men in the state are the business and professional people. They've just enough of nothing to think that they have something," Charles Smith, one of the Biloxi volunteers, commented.

At the end of the first month, a retreat was held at the Highlander Folk Center in Knoxville, Tennessee, by those working in the White Community Project. With the experience of more than a quarter of a century of organizing in the South as a guide, Myles Horton—who is the director of the Highlander Folk Center—posed the right questions. The volunteers in the White Community Project gave the right answers: those 10 who thought that the effort could best be spent contacting the poor white people of the community returned to Biloxi and worked with the poor white persons; the others took assignments bolstering the staffs mailing literature and sipping clandestine cups of tea in the homes of white ministers and professionals.

At the end of August the Biloxi volunteers left for the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

Happily, this was not the end of a beginning, but the spread of a start. This aspect of the Mississippi Summer Project didn't end.

The idea had taken roots.

A summer's flirtation had become a marriage, "in sickness and in health, for better or worse, until . . ." Four of the Biloxi project members made a synthesis of the good and bad techniques used. During the early days of September the staff and volunteers received a mimeographed recruiting leaflet for the mighty *Army of Gideon*:

**WE MUST BE ALLIES . . .
RACE HAS LED US BOTH TO POVERTY**

COFO's experimental white community project in Biloxi has forced an inescapable conclusion: our existing experience organizing the white poor of Mississippi must be developed into a major portion of the COFO program in the coming year. No matter how difficult the task, every effort must be made, by those of us who share the dream of an interracial movement of the poor, to establish programs in white communities in twenty counties by the end of next year.

This means that we need people, i.e., personnel and leadership, to undertake a most difficult, dangerous, and fascinating task of community organization. There are a few requirements for these people. They must have an understanding of the poverty of the Southern white poor. They must be able to communicate a concern for that poverty without precipitating or reinforcing fear and hostility toward the Negro and the freedom movement. They must have training in the field under COFO's sophisticated programs. The leadership must be willing to stay in the field for several years, the personnel for several months. White skin is required only of those who have the initial task of sounding out the potential community leadership as unobtrusively as possible. If enough of those leaders respond favorably to the idea of COFO programs with which to fight their own poverty, then they will invite COFO staff in to help them run their program.

PLEASE SEEK OUT people who are interested in working with this program and get them in touch with White Folks Program, 1017 Lynch St., Jackson, Mississippi. There is a great freedom of choice over jobs in this movement. Its bureaucracy does not bite, does not stick people into convenient cogs. People are encouraged to do the job they think they can do best. No one should have the fear that his humanness will be sacrificed to the cause.

The important work to be done is with poor folks and not with moderates and liberals. The white poor have the political need of decent jobs, housing, education, and health. The movement must go to them and help them develop their own leadership rather than demand that the moderates and the liberals fight their political battles for them. The greatest thing about the freedom movement in Mississippi (and what the rest of the country should consider very seriously) is that the people themselves are voicing their own political needs.

Both politically and in human terms, the freedom movement has no other choice but to develop the white folks program. The resistance in the past within the movement to the white poor program has not been to the idea or to the necessity, but has reflected a frank recognition that people who know how to do the job are not available and that the hostility of the white poor to the movement makes it a near-impossible task. The populist movement and the labor movement both failed to resolve the issue of race. It is the responsibility of the freedom movement, before the threat of the movement to the white poor further increases, to include them in our efforts.

Politically, the freedom movement cannot succeed as a Negro movement for two reasons: First, a solid black vote can never be a political majority of the state or the South. Neither can a solid voting block of the white poor. Only 42.3% of Mississippi and roughly 20% of the

South is Negro. In only 27 of 82 counties in Mississippi are Negroes a majority, and in eleven of those, they are bare majorities of less than 60%. Negro political control of these counties would eventually lead to partition (Pakistan was created out of Muslim sections of India). Separate black societies is an impossible solution in as interdependent a society as ours.

Secondly, a racial political order can never be a stable one. Not only would that order create a chaotic standstill in legislative chambers, it would also create nothing less than a racial war among the people. For the freedom movement to follow the insane path toward that order would create a revengeful Samson who destroys himself in order to destroy the nation which oppressed his people. Hopes for human rights would suffer a destructive blow if race were to block the possibility of the South solving its problems of poverty. It is important to note that the creation of a political voice of poor folks stands to improve the economy for all. There is no reason for the middle and upper classes to be threatened by the development of decent jobs, education, housing, and health for all.

In human terms, the freedom movement has the clear imperative to include the white poor chained to the Negro at the bottom of the economic ladder. It is clear from the U.S. Census of Mississippi (p. 132) that this is true:

Negro family income of less than \$1,000/yr.—	65,711	households
" " " from \$1,000 to \$2,000/yr.—	51,640	"
Total—28% of population	117,351	"
White family income of less than \$1,000/yr.—	32,751	households
" " " from \$1,000 to \$2,000/yr.—	38,622	"
Total—12.7% of population	71,373	"

Almost one-third of the really poor folks in the state are white.

Personnel for the program will come from interested staff and volunteers with a couple of months' experience in the movement. Hopefully, white SNCC and CORE field secretaries will undertake the leadership of this program in Mississippi and the rest of the South. Disgusted labor organizers who want a fresh approach provide a second resource. The experimental projects now under way of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) may develop some good community organizers they could spare for work in the South, as could the Hazard movement. Highlander Folk School, in all probability, would continue to provide orientation and workshops for the white folks program. Effort will not be spared to recruit personnel from Southern colleges (even in

Mississippi) as well as from Northern and Western schools. Hopefully, this recruiting effort will mean that one-third of COFO's work in Mississippi by the end of three years will be with white poor folks.

Northerner and Southerner, black and white, should be encouraged to join this effort. The white task force which moves into the community first will spend a couple of months finding the potential leadership of the program by talking to people individually, and disassociated from COFO, in the bars and restaurants, churches and ball games. The task force should interest the people in decent jobs, etc., for poor folks; overcome their hostility to the movement; and encourage them to organize and run their own program. COFO would provide the financial and personnel resources to make the program work. COFO would draw on both white and black sources of people to establish interracial programs to fight the battle for decent jobs, etc. That fight will eventually draw the two groups together.

By the middle of September, 1964, a small group of SNCC field secretaries had scattered themselves around 5 counties, a figure that hopefully will increase to 20 counties with the influx of several thousand northern students in Mississippi in the summer of 1965.

Mostly, now, these volunteers just talk and ask questions while responding to help in whatever emergencies arise in the communities, such as the birth of a baby or a calf, securing enrollment of blind children in the crowded state school, filling out Social Security application forms for illiterates, reading mail, and catching hogs that have broken out of pens and threaten to ruin a crop.

But always there are the questions: "What do you think of having a community center where we can have classes in reading for the older people, show movies or help the kids who are falling behind in school?" "Do you want me to write a letter and send off some of this dirt so we can know how it should be *poisoned* and fertilized?" "If we could get some agricultural students down from the North, could they help us much around here?" "Will you be able to put up a student when summertime comes?" "Since our problem is better crops, roads and hospitals, how does the Klan help these things?"

Then there is always the letter writing to northern organizations for help. It's evident that the poverty program of the federal government will never be even a trickle of help in Mississippi. Letters to

the National Farmers Union are sent: "Help." Letters are sent to national cooperative organizations: "Help!" The poor white farmers are overcharged by the merchants in town and short-counted by the operators of the cotton gins. (Five bales come out only four, top-grade cotton is second-grade, and a challenge gets a threat—"Take your cotton elsewhere" . . . when "elsewhere" either doesn't exist or is 40 miles away.) Generally the letters are ignored by indifferent secretaries away up north or get unconcerned formal replies: "At this time our organization does not extend itself any further than Ohio. We suggest that you make inquiry with the appropriate agency of the State of Mississippi."

But still a volunteer walks down from an \$8-a-month cabin, climbs into a donated 1950 Plymouth, drives down the road farther, asks more questions, lends a hand with a chore if need be, and writes more letters.

Somehow those working in the "White Folks" Project go on in spite of little immediate tangible gains, probably because they know they will succeed. Or perhaps it's because they know that they can't afford to fail, lest Hitler's mother spawns another and he comes into these same predominantly white communities screeching loudly the lies that were only suggested during the 1964 Presidential campaign: "Your wives are unsafe because the niggers aren't contained. Your stomach is bloated because the niggers are taking white men's jobs. America has only a few jobs left; why should the coons have them?"

There *are* a few signs of encouragement, though. Those with whom the volunteers talk are told of the connection with SNCC and COFO and that before long Negro field secretaries will be in to help with getting the things done for folks in this community. There are smiles as the white field secretaries are called "nigger lovers," and there is no venom in the voices as they say, "I wouldn't care if a bear came in here if'n we can just get something done."

Then, too, there are negative signs of success. Three State Highway patrolmen beat a merchant in the Whitfork County seat when he told them: "Nigger lover or not, I think they are helping our people. Nobody else had tried to do what they were doing. I'm not going to stop selling them food."

And even though the SNCC field secretaries miss a meal or at least postpone it for a long time—because there is no money for the \$9.64 salaries during a particular week—things don't get too bad. There is hope. Come the summer of 1965, with the influx of more troops, enough hell will be raised so that an indifferent nation and state will suddenly discover that there are ways of distributing some of the millions of tons of surplus food rotting in caves and storage bins to the people in a county or over the state without first getting permission from the Mississippi power structure.

There is hope because land has been tentatively selected for the construction of a community center—because there are people who wonder why there wasn't a freedom school here for white people last summer.

Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer was once asked if her goal was equality with the white man. She answered: "No. What would I look like fighting for equality with the white man? I don't want to go down that low. I want the *true democracy* that'll raise me and that white man up." Those who know her best will tell you that she isn't talking about just the Mississippi white man . . . but America.

Credence for Mrs. Hamer's philosophical truth is provided when we view the country as it *is*, in perhaps a painful ugliness, rather than the way we would have it be. This nation is *not* composed of 49 states and a foreign island named Mississippi; damned or blessed, America is composed of 50 Mississippis which vary from each other in degrees—and at a given moment when a New York cop shoots a Negro youth in the back 20 yards away for refusing to halt for a traffic ticket there may be no degree of difference . . . and if there be, who among us can make the distinction?

Mississippi schools are bad—the worst in the nation. Other schools are good only when compared with places like Mississippi. And where is there a place in this nation where the fecal odors of racism can't be sniffed, even though we spray self-righteously with "pine mist" and "room freshener"?

The old who are poor languish in a damnable neglect in Mississippi, and those of limited means grow up unnecessarily scarred for their short lives, solely because money denies them access to proper

medical care. Tell us now when you view the same conditions in Michigan and say that they are better . . . tell us what they are better than. Mississippi? How strange it must seem *not* to be able to say the same thing about a soldier, sailor or marine stationed in this nation or in a far-flung outpost of the world.

The fact of the matter is that Negroes and whites in Mississippi suffer as do the poor, aged and infirm all over the nation because of an immoral kind of indifference that is the direct by-product of the slavery—both in and out of chains—that is part of our nation from its very birth; that slavery was sanctified by both the Bible and the “founding fathers,” who wrote into their Constitution that black men were to be counted as only three-fifths human.

After the Constitution a tortuous process began: the development of a system of ignoring the shrieks, cries and moans of the raped, dehumanized, castrated black millions whose labor created wealth for this nation. As a country, America succeeded immeasurably well in this fiendish mental pursuit of being callous. But, alas, our nation succeeded too well. We could be indifferent to the degradation of the *blacks* because we weren't black and nobody was chaining our souls. We learned to be indifferent to everything and everyone except those things which *immediately* threatened our little bungalows in Shaker Heights or Westchester County or Beverly Hills. How else can we justify—nay, explain—starving people in our nation and the world, with millions of tons of food rotting in our storage bins? How, when one President, John F. Kennedy, can say, on April 10, 1963, that “. . . one-sixth of our people [Americans] live below minimal levels of health, housing, food and education,” do we rationalize \$50,000,000,000 for military expenditures and a mere \$1,000,000,000, at best, for an antipoverty program?

A lot of comfortable persons won't let themselves know that for millions the American dream comes closer to being a nightmare in a world where rain means that everyone must get up to move beds from leaks, where babies' lips are reddened and sore from constant washing so as not to attract the bite of a cat-size rat, and where entire families live for weeks on nothing but flour, grits and grease gravy.

There are at least 20,000,000 such people in the world's richest nation, and Mississippi, with its average personal income of \$1,379 (or 56.4 per cent of the national average) for 1963, has more than its proportional share.

Depending on how hungry or how unhealthy people have to be before you call them “poor,” there are perhaps 54,000,000 such persons—“one-third of a nation,” some say. Every state, every region has them; in a few unfortunate places like Appalachia and Mississippi there is scarcely anyone else. Nowhere are these poor persons considered tourist attractions; few local chambers of commerce advertise them; our cities and communities are designed to hide them; they are largely “invisible.”

And all of this indifference and planned unawareness stems from three centuries of a national conspiracy to encourage black men to remain in a place designed for them at the inception of the nation—at the bottom of everything—where they were to remain quietly “invisible” and quietly ignored, mute census figures, and *good niggers*.

Even today most of the “comfortables” in our nation don't really believe that the price has been too high in spite of their own insecurity in suburbia after arising out of the poverty of the ghettos. How does one comfortably eat a sirloin steak in front of a starving urchin? And isn't it more uncomfortable if by some miracle that urchin grows up and you feel his ominous presence as you leave the opera with your mink coat on, or pass through the ghettos on the elevated train, or read of burglaries, or learn that his cup overflowed one night and he ran through the streets of Harlem unafraid even of the death-laden men in blue uniforms who were put there to guard his *cage*?

Those same dispossessed and disinherited people—to a more intense degree—are in Mississippi. The power structure (Senators, bankers, utility owners, planters and sheriffs) of Mississippi is disturbed too. Their power, both within the state and in the national governing bodies, where they control the military expenditures and the federal judiciary, is being threatened by the efforts of SNCC. The Mississippi Summer Project of 1964, with its freedom schools,

northern white "troops," community centers and other forms for organizing the Negroes of the state, has threatened.

And more threatening is the organization of the poor white Mississippians. Mississippi, like the other states of the nation, still makes pretenses that the government is directed by the dictates of a democratically selected set of officials and democratically passed laws, i.e., a majority rule.

Mississippi, like other states, is in fact controlled by a power element which derives its power from the abstention of vast numbers from the democratic processes. (The alternative form in some northern states has been to control narrowly the possible choices of the electorate by having a well-run "in-group" (sometimes called a "machine").

There is a realization in Mississippi—by even the most naïve—that if the poor whites of the state (at least one-third of the abjectly poor in the state are white) and the poor Negroes of the state, who have far more in common than it is safe to enunciate, join hands around, through, and in spite of the veil of color, the present power arrangement will be changed. This is precisely what must be done to resolve the pressing matters of poverty, health and education in Mississippi—indeed, in the nation.

Nowhere in history can there be found an example to the contrary, unless it be an exception which proves the rule. No meaningful steps were taken to insure the vote for women until the women organized and raised hell to the extent of making the rest of the nation concerned (i.e., inconvenienced) about the problem that sorely pressed upon women's souls. Meaningful labor legislation in our nation didn't come until there were millions who had banded themselves together to assert their felt needs for collective bargaining. For reasons not quite clear as of this moment, the factory employees engaged in such uncouth things as "sit-down" strikes and, instead of employing the good offices of the National Association of Manufacturers to serve labor's interests, formed their own groups.

And, for what it's worth, the recent civil rights legislation came as a token effort to calm a mighty rumbling of black discontent that

had been expressed both in and out of the Negro organizational structure.

It would not be amiss at this point to state that what Mrs. Hamer referred to as the *true democracy*—which she wanted herself and the white man to raise up—is the one that can be created only by the uncomfortable black man and the uncomfortable white man wresting some of the power from the *comfortables*. As the suffragettes, labor unions and others have done, so must the impoverished.

The problem of the uncomfortable or impoverished is accelerated by recent technological advances, which are described in such terms as "automation" and "cybernation." The problems will hit the South in a frightening degree even before disturbing so deeply other areas of the nation, primarily because there are no unions to impede the speed of the inevitable.

Technology is an even greater threat to the South, because one of the basic reasons for many of the plants' having opened in these states in the past has been the cheap labor and the protection of that cheap labor for the manufacturer by the use of "right-to-work laws." A machine is just as cheap in Milwaukee as it is in Meridian—and probably cheaper because there isn't the added shipping cost of bringing it South.

With fewer jobs in the South and Negroes demanding a redistribution of the scarcity of them by the employment of more Negroes in areas heretofore excluded, a setting of urgency is created in order to avoid the *Fire Next Time*, where the morality of survival will be operative in Mississippi and elsewhere: that morality which justifies what you feel you must do as you take a 12-gauge shotgun, kill a man, let him drop to the ground, take his package of meat, and carry it home to your starving family, knowing full well that it is better that you and your family live than your unasked benefactor.

Happily, SNCC is not the only organization acting on its knowledge that the solution to the problem of the *uncomfortables* can come only out of effective organization by the *uncomfortables* to satisfy their pressing needs. Another is the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF), which has begun a similar project in

Eastern Tennessee and Kentucky. The Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) have begun a project in Baltimore, Maryland—called the Union for Jobs and Income Now (U-JOIN)—which is organizing black and white unemployed persons to pressure for consideration from the comfortable persons of the power structure of Maryland and the federal government.

Because Mississippi is Mississippi, failure of SNCC to effectuate an integrated organization of the poor white persons of that state will probably result in the greatest national disaster, because of the fertile breeding ground for undisguised “super-Americanism” provided by the strength of the Klan and the Citizens Councils of the state.

On the other hand, the success of the “White Folks” Project in Mississippi would wildly encourage and provoke similar organizations nationwide. . . .

It is a truth: “If it can be done in Mississippi, who is there who can say that it can’t be done everywhere?”

During the summer of 1964, the “White Folks” Project began; neither it nor the summer has ended.

VIII

Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party

Midway

I've come this far to freedom
 And I won't turn back.
 I'm changing to the highway
 From my old dirt track.
 I'm coming and I'm going
 And I'm stretching and I'm growing
 And I'll reap what I've been sowing
 Or my skin's not black;
 I've prayed and slaved and waited
 And I've sung my song.
 You've slashed me and you've treed me
 And you've everything but freed me,
 But in time you'll know you need me
 And it won't be long.

—*Unknown Student of the
 Mississippi Freedom Schools*

IN 1876 Rutherford B. Hayes was the Republican candidate for President of the United States. Neither Hayes nor his Democratic opponent, Samuel Tilden, received sufficient electoral votes to win the election. There were disputed vote counts in several of the

southern states which would be used by Congress to determine the victor. Hayes met with some distinguished white Southern gentlemen to discuss what arrangements could be made with regard to the South, where millions of ex-slaves lived. It was the period of Reconstruction.

The Negro vote was large enough to elect hundreds of black men to public office, including the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States. A working coalition between the ex-slaves and poor whites had infused the South with progressive legislation, such as laws creating public schools, which would have been impossible to enact if the ex-slaveowners dominated.

A "compromise" was worked out.

Hayes was given the Presidency and the federal troops were withdrawn from the South, enabling the former slaveowners to massacre their way back to power. In return, the former slaveowners supported the tariff policies, industrial-expansion practices and railroad grants so earnestly desired by northern businesses.

When the troops were withdrawn and Reconstruction gasped for breath, the white population of Mississippi joined its brethren across the South in *redemption*. Redemption meant restoration of absolute white rule. Redemption meant nullification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution . . . and the power that black citizens had exercised under them.

The method used was "genocide."

The method was effective. In less than 20 years the blood of millions of black lambs had washed away all the guilty stains of a South that had *lost* a war.

Negro voters became almost extinct. (In 1890 in Mississippi there were 189,884 Negro voters and 118,870 white voters. Today there are 23,801 Negro voters and more than 500,000 white voters.) As it was in Mississippi, so it was throughout the South.

With the destruction of Negro political power by use of "nigger barbecues," the way was clear for Mississippi to build, through its state government, a society in which black "arrogance and aspiration" would be as treasonable as it was impossible.

Jim Crow was born.

A violent cram course was conducted in black docility. The South was successful; in survival techniques the Negro was an apt student. The lesson was taught that "privileges" and facilities were for *whites only* . . . including the voting booth. Within 19 years after the last southern Negro Congressman left the House of Representatives in 1901, the black Mississippian had learned that everything he did was a privilege, everything he had was a gift. Negroes who objected either died or left for Chicago. By 1920 it could be said that there were only two kinds of Negroes in Mississippi: happy ones and dead ones.

Thus, in 1954 the laws of racial segregation first enacted in the 1890's and early 1900's had become "ancient traditions and customs," which garnered another concession in line with the *compromise* of President Hayes of 1876; that victory was the phrase "deliberate speed" in the school desegregation decision of the United States Supreme Court.

But even "deliberate speed" was too fast to a Mississippi power clique which shouted, "Never!"

Mississippi in 1954 defecated a series of White Citizens Council chapters, which eventually flushed their influence, by way of cooperating chapters, over half of the United States. It was not until 1961 that there was any challenge to the absoluteness of the "Mississippi way of life," and this challenge was the Freedom Rides.

Though the Freedom Rides (consisting of teams of bus passengers riding throughout the South and integrating the facilities of the larger terminals) were shocking and spectacular to Mississippi, which was the prime focal point of this national demonstration, they didn't constitute a threat to the Mississippi status quo. The results were not lasting. Even today, in 1965, it is a courageous Negro who will sit on the white side of the Jackson, Mississippi, bus terminal only to have the cop on duty take a walk down a long block . . . as other brave white males question the Negro's sanity and desire to live.

The lack of lasting effect of the Freedom Rides is understandable.

ALL of Mississippi is hard-core. ALL of the local and state governments are committed to total segregation. Elected officials

can personally lead physical attacks on those in integrated facilities and be succored by the knowledge that the more vicious the attack, the more likely re-election.

It was difficult not to reach the conclusion that in Mississippi the racial composition of the electorate had to be changed in order for there to be a basis for *moderation* or a forum for negotiation.

Voter registration became the prime focus of the Movement in Mississippi. It began on an "organized" scale with the arrival of Bob Moses in McComb, Mississippi, in 1961. In 1962 the voter registration work spread northward to the Mississippi Delta.

For three years the Movement tried to get people registered in a long and not too dull grind that produced droplets of Negro voters in a situation that requires a mighty river of voter registration to be effective. The movement plodded along. Canvassing, persuading, and counseling possible suicide (going to register) took up most of the workers' time—when they were not in dilapidated jails. Beatings were always a certainty. Lynch mobs and shootings, though infrequent, were never unlikely. But the trickle of new voters was so slow that it would take a score of centuries to get results.

It was a very tired and discouraged Bob Moses who talked with Dr. L. Ben Wyckoff and his wife, Jersey, in Atlanta during the spring of 1963. The contact was initiated because SNCC had just begun its plans for a programmed learning course for teaching literacy in Mississippi. Ben Wyckoff is one of the leading world authorities on the subject. One of the topics covered in the conversation was the theory of the teaching machines and "reinforcement." Reinforcement is a psychological term for reward or punishment. According to Ben Wyckoff, it is a well-established principle of learning that one learns better and faster if the reward or punishment for answering a question (reinforcement) is closely associated in time with the giving of an answer.

Consciously and unconsciously, the idea must have fermented within Bob Moses. It was related to the whole problem of registration and political organizing in Mississippi. The most discouraging aspect of the work was the feeling that it would be so long before

even the trickle of voters registered could participate and feel that the risks undertaken were worth it. Reinforcement. Because of the poll-tax law of Mississippi, it was not unusual for there to be a two-year delay between registration and the first date of being eligible to vote. To vote in state elections, one has to have paid a poll tax for two consecutive years. Poll-tax payments are received for only one year at a time and only during a special time of the year; no double payments are permitted. Hence, the reinforcement is poor.

By the close of the summer of 1963, an idea had jelled which would improve the reinforcement: the Freedom Vote Campaign. In the fall of 1963, Aaron Henry (a Negro pharmacist from Clarksdale, Mississippi) and the Rev. Edwin King (a white chaplain at the predominantly Negro Tougaloo College, just outside of Jackson, Mississippi) ran as candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor, respectively, from the Freedom Party. Also listed on the Freedom Ballot were the candidates of the Mississippi Republican and Democratic parties for Governor and Lieutenant Governor.

The purpose of the Freedom Vote was to provide political education for the Negroes of the state, who had so little to do with the elective processes, and to compile evidence to disprove the constant assertion that the voting among Negroes was slight because of apathy—a concept that hardly seems to need disproving. Every adult in the state who was a resident was eligible to participate in the Freedom Election. Some 93,000 Negroes—voting at polling places set up in Negro barbershops, stores and beauty shops and on fenders of convenient cars—participated in the election. If proof was needed that Negroes were eager to vote, eager for political activity, eager to register, the Freedom Vote Campaign of November, 1963, provided that proof.

The Freedom Vote Campaign of 1963 provided positive and quick reinforcement. Needless to say, Henry and King won by an overwhelming margin. Aiding in the project for the first time were large numbers of northern white college volunteers who had taken two weeks off from school.

The months between November, 1963, and February, 1964, were relatively quiet in Mississippi. The biggest event during this period was Freedom Day in Hattiesburg, which began on January 22 and resulted in several weeks of continuous picketing of the courthouse as hundreds of local Negroes tried to register. A federal court order against the registrar there—handed down after three years of legal hassling—asking that he stop the discriminatory registration practices, had precipitated Freedom Day. On hand to participate was George Ballis, editor of a labor paper in Fresno, California.

At the urging of Bob Moses, Jack Minnis of the SNCC research department convened a meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, on February 1, 1964, to consider plans on how to make a national project of Mississippi during the summer of 1964. Hardly had the idea been approved of challenging the traditional Democrats at the National Convention in August before George Ballis gave the political party of the Freedom Movement a name.

Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) was the name Ballis used.

Along with two others (Mrs. Beverly Axelrod, San Francisco civil rights lawyer par excellence, and Claude Hurst of Fresno), Ballis introduced a resolution at the California Democratic Council held in Long Beach, California, February 21-23, 1964, which called for the seating of the MFDP delegates in Atlantic City.

With a burst of enthusiasm, there was unanimous adoption of the Ballis resolution on February 23, 1964.

But still the program of challenge was not off the launching pad.

The hope was that the major civil rights organizations—the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Congress of Racial Equality—would join with the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in pressing the challenge.

Unity was almost imperative. SNCC was nearly broke—as usual—and couldn't subsidize the challenge. State conventions had to be contacted to secure resolutions in support of the seating of the Mississippi Freedom Democrats. A massive collection of disciplined

demonstrators had to be mobilized in Atlantic City in order to make it difficult for President Lyndon B. Johnson to follow his proclivity to capitulate to a southern coalition which wouldn't want the Freedom Democrats seated.

Some signs were encouraging. While attending a meeting of liberals in Washington, D.C., Bob Moses outlined the programs for the Mississippi Freedom Summer, coming in a few months. Present was Joseph Rauh, vice-president of the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), dictator of the Democratic party of the District of Columbia, general counsel for Walter Reuther's United Automobile Workers (UAW), and confidant of Hubert H. Humphrey.

"If there's a challenge," he said, "if there's anybody at the Democratic Convention challenging the seating of the outlaw Mississippi Democrats [the traditional Mississippi Democrats], I'll help make sure that the challengers are seated."

Jack Pratt, employee of the Commission on Religion and Race of the National Council of Churches, nudged Bob. "Did you hear what Rauh said?" he asked. "Did you hear it?"

Bob had heard it.

They approached Rauh after the close of the meeting. Again Rauh gave assurances of help if there was a challenge to the traditional Mississippi Democrats. The offer seemed a godsend. For a challenge to be successful, there had to be money to pay expenses. Rauh's contact with Reuther and the UAW might provide a source for defraying part of the costs. For a Freedom Party challenge to be successful, support from Democratic delegations from northern states was essential. The UAW and the ADA had the reputations of being the most powerful liberal forces within the Democratic Party which could help. Feelers were made for a later appointment when Bob Moses could involve Miss Ella J. Baker (one-half of the SNCC advisory staff) and some others in a conference concerning the help that Rauh would be willing to offer.

Some signs were discouraging.

After securing assurances from CORE of full support—along with the CORE assignment of Norman Hill to work with Ella Baker and others on the Mississippi challenge—the Moses-Baker-

Hill trio journeyed to Atlantic City to the National Convention of the UAW (which was held March 20-26) to see Walter Reuther, president of the union.

Because the challenge had started in typical SNCC fashion—moneyless—it was hoped that a confrontation with Reuther would result in both moral and *financial* support. Mrs. Mildred Jefferies, a Democratic State Committeewoman of Michigan and a member of the UAW, arranged a luncheon between Reuther and representatives of student organizations at the convention. Moses of SNCC, representatives of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and persons from the Northern Student Movement (NSM) spoke at the luncheon and presented ideas.

When Reuther responded, it was as if he had heard nothing that had been said. His remarks were confined to the projection of plans he had about the utilization of appropriations from the poverty program.

From the convention the next major conference was in Washington, D.C., at the offices of Joseph Rauh. Rauh was asked to be counsel for the Mississippi challenge. It was made clear that there wasn't money to pay legal fees.

Rauh accepted.

Calling upon his experiences in challenges at prior Democratic conventions, Rauh offered helpful suggestions: as much as possible, the procedures followed by the Freedom Democrats had to be these: first, to participate in the precinct, county and state conventions of the traditional Mississippi Democrats and, second, when frustrated in this attempt, to follow procedures approximating the procedures of the traditional Democrats as closely as possible.

It was pointed out that a brief should be submitted to the Credentials Committee of the Party and that research personnel would be needed in the preparation of the brief. Because Miss Eleanor Holmes, graduating student at Yale Law School, would not be available until May or later, when graduation and some sort of legal examinations took place, the services of H. Miles Jaffe were secured. Jaffe was from the Washington Human Rights Project directed by William Higgs. Shortly after the re-

search work began, the full-time volunteer services of a sociologist, Dr. Danny Foss, were used.

But the hour was late. The end of April was approaching and the broad coalition for support, finance and demonstration forces wasn't materializing. Already a lot of conventions of northern Democrats had been held, and they could not now be approached for resolutions in support of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. CORE was having internal problems: Norman Hill had resigned in a huff in a policy dispute with James Farmer and others within CORE.

And Bayard Rustin was fiddling. While *committed* to recruiting and organizing tens of thousands for the Democratic Convention, he was yet uncommitted. None of the grand plans had been executed. Rustin seemed unwilling to do anything until he had built a broad coalition of the UAW, CORE, SNCC and SCLC for personnel and for finance, including a salary for Rustin equal to his abilities.

Ella Baker acted. The proposal was made and accepted that the work of organizing the demonstration be separated from the work of gaining support for the challenge within the Democratic parties throughout the North. On borrowed money, and with SNCC's \$10-a-week staff personnel, an office was opened in Washington, D.C., on April 24 for the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

With a little over three months left until the Convention, the scurrying began. Ella Baker acted as coordinator of the office. Walt Tillow, Bernard Conn, Reginald Robinson, Alex Stein, Charles Sherrod, Leslie McLemore, Miss Barbara Jones and Frank Smith manned the office, wrote letters and made speeches before the state conventions in key states when money permitted travel. Senators and Congressmen in Washington, D.C., were badgered for support.

But things did not seem encouraging. Success of the challenge would depend on the ability to get national attention: a few hundred demonstrators outside of Convention Hall could be ignored; tens of thousands could not. Much was in the hands of Rustin.

In this mixed setting of successes and procrastinations, the MFDP

held its kickoff rally at the Masonic Temple on Lynch Street in Jackson, Mississippi, on Sunday, April 26.

I was there.

For several days Mississippi had been shrouded in gloomy rain. Saturday, the day before, at the state-wide meeting of high-school students, a bare 85 showed up; hundreds had been expected. At the gigantic kickoff rally the vastness of the auditorium, which could seat thousands, engulfed the feeble attendance of 200. There was a sense of impertinence and irrelevance: these few dare to dream of challenging the traditional Mississippi Democrats, who could command the powers of all of the southern politicians and the allegiance of President Johnson (who, in turn, would get the support of the civil rights leaders, such as Roy Wilkins, Martin Luther King and James Farmer, and such powerful figures as Walter Reuther, Congressman William Dawson of Chicago and Congressman Charles Diggs of Detroit—all of whom could contrive reasons to show that support of President Johnson was not support of the South even as the President supported Mississippi).

The scene bordered on the ridiculous. It was ridiculous by any standard other than that of SNCC. But one could not help but wonder if even SNCC had gone beyond the pale of rationality in this case. (Months later, on August 6, the Masonic Temple was packed to capacity with 2,500 at the MFDP state convention.)

As the rally was drawing to a close, Bob Moses came in fresh off a plane from the North but stale from the despairs of his missions. Some form of support that he had sought and had been promised had been denied. His appearance at the rally was perfunctory. As soon as circumstances permitted, Bob left, trudged to his room a few blocks away, and withdrew in its relative quietness for three days.

Laurence Guyot, robust SNCC field secretary, native Mississippian and newly elected chairman of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party at the state-wide rally, collapsed in exhaustion from weeks of overwork. John O'Neal took Guyot to an apartment and summoned a doctor. Tony Gray, husband of the Freedom Democratic candidate in the coming June 2 Democratic primary, Mrs.

Victoria Gray, was mad. "All the colored folks in the state should be here. They are all dressed up. Church is over. They don't have anywhere else to go. I know," he said in condemnation of the attendance.

But the indomitable Lois Chaffee, CORE field secretary, seemed to take the matter in stride. Lois, as dutiful as she will be until death summons her to turn in her COFO button, sang the closing "We Shall Overcome" with the others and scampered across the street and down half a block to where COFO headquarters was and bowed her head in rapt attention over a pile of material on her cubicle desk that she was determined to read in order to prepare some sort of summary report.

A huge Labrador dog spotted Lois running across the street and followed her into the office. Lois often fed him. Shaking his rich burned-brown-colored hair of the moisture as he stood near Lois in the office to get her attention, the dog's odor reminded those nearby of another task left undone: his bath.

MFDP's kickoff was not overly impressive.

In May, 1964, in Mississippi four candidates from the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party had qualified to run in the Democratic primary of June 2. Mrs. Victoria Gray of Hattiesburg was opposing Senator John Stennis. The Rev. John Cameron was the sole competition for the incumbent Congressman, William M. Comers of the Fifth Congressional District, who was second-in-command of the House Rules Committee. James Monroe Houston, a 74-year-old retired machinist from Vicksburg with a civil rights record dating back to 1934, was the Freedom Party candidate in the Third Congressional District of Mississippi. Up in the Second Congressional District, Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer was the Congressional candidate.

The political posture of Mrs. Hamer was representative of the attitude of the three other Freedom Party candidates.

"My candidacy is directed to whites as well as Negroes," she said. "All Mississippians, white and Negro alike, are the victims of this all-white, one-party power structure. I'm running against Jamie Whitten, and we mustn't forget that Jamie used his position on the

House Appropriations Subcommittee of Agriculture to kill a bill that would have trained 2,400 tractor drivers in Greenwood. Six hundred of those to be trained were white!" That was her exhortation anywhere a church, lodge hall or corner store could be found where folks would listen.

Wherever a speech was made, solicitations for Freedom Registrations on the Freedom books were sought by Freedom registrars.

This Freedom Registration served as a method of organizing Negroes throughout the state, gave some focus to the attempts of Negroes to register in the official books of the county, and formed the basis of participation in Freedom Elections. Irritating the Mississippi power structure now is the knowledge that every time any official election is held, a Freedom Election is held. Each Freedom Election stirs the black giant more as it develops a greater yearning to substitute the real ballot for the symbolic one.

"Games" have a way of becoming real.

Read or write or not, one can register for the Freedom Ballot. An "X" mark is considered sufficient if there is a witness. Philosophically the practical position is taken that it is both illegal and immoral to deny, discourage, demean and prevent Negroes from getting educations—as is done by the power of Mississippi—and then penalize the poorly educated—the group in which the system of oppression has been most successful—as being unfit.

Only two requirements were promulgated for the Freedom Registration: to be 21 or over and to be a resident of the state.

While Cameron, Gray, Houston and Hamer were campaigning in Mississippi, support was developing elsewhere. On May 21 the Young Democratic Club of the University of Virginia passed a resolution calling for the seating of the Freedom Democrats.

On June 2 the four candidates of the MFDP were defeated in the primary election. Or were they? Thousands of names were added to the Freedom Registration books and carefully filed away with the names of the 93,000 others who had registered in November, 1963. Careful documentation of the intimidation and harassment of each of the candidates was filed with the Freedom Registrations, to be hurried to the protective setting of Atlanta. In Atlanta copies were made on microfilm.

Encouragement was found in the announcement made during the early part of June by the subcommittee on the allocation of delegates to the Democratic National Convention: party loyalty was a prerequisite for delegations to be seated, a requirement that the traditional Mississippi delegation could never satisfy.

On June 13 the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) passed a resolution calling for "rejection of the racist Mississippi Democratic Delegation" and the seating of the "integrated Freedom Democratic Party." The resolution was significant. Its significance is found in the ADA's status as the most powerful "liberal" wing of the Democratic Party. Much of the credit for Adlai Stevenson's getting the Democratic Presidential nomination in 1952 and 1956 goes to the ADA. Past presidents of the ADA include such persons as Vice-President Hubert H. Humphrey. Joseph Rauh, national counsel for the UAW, was a high official in the organization, as was Walter Reuther of the UAW. To those who believe in "signs," this was a good one.

The language of the ADA resolution sounded exactly like what the Freedom Democrats wanted to hear most: "It would make a mockery of everything that the Democratic Party stands for," the promulgators of the resolution had said. A copy was sent to the national chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

More state delegations were meeting. More letters, personal contacts and phone calls were being made, asking for help. There was furious scrambling by the Washington office of the Freedom Democratic Party to do the *difficult* in the few days left.

On June 14 in Lansing, Michigan, the state Democratic convention unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the seating of the Freedom Democrats.

On June 15, on a motion of Sylvia Hunter of Manhattan, seconded by Ray Guenter and John English, the New York delegation to the National Convention went on record favoring the seating of the MFDP.

June 16, 1964, was like no day had been since Mississippi came into existence.

To the north some 500 miles, there were hundreds of youthful college people ready to turn back the evils of the century of oppres-

sion since the Civil War: Oxford, Ohio, was the place. To the east in Atlanta, Georgia, SNCC was moving its national office to Greenwood, Mississippi, in the Delta. Within Mississippi a scab was being pulled off a sore, revealing a carefully concealed lie: the lie that the delegates to the Democratic National Convention are selected in accordance with the laws.

In Mississippi there are 1,884 voting precincts. Each of these precincts was supposed to have a meeting on June 16 at 10 A.M. at the regular place where the ballots are cast. At the precinct meetings delegates to the 82 county conventions were supposed to be elected. From the 82 county conventions, delegates were supposed to be elected to attend the caucus of the five Congressional districts; the district caucuses were to select the delegates to the state convention and name the delegates to the National Convention of the Democratic Party, subject to the approval of the state convention. But this just doesn't happen.

The sampling derived from the experiences of Negroes in trying to find these precinct meetings indicates that three-fourths, or 1,413, of the precincts don't bother to have a meeting. Canvasses by phone couldn't produce persons listed as white voters in towns who had ever heard of a precinct meeting.

Not every precinct in the state was covered by the integration workers, but the sampling was sufficiently broad to reveal the pattern of Mississippi politics. The refusals of the traditional Democrats to allow Negroes to participate in the selection of the delegates to the National Convention were documented in affidavits. The report on Ruleville, Mississippi, was typical:

"June 16, 1964, Ruleville, located in Sunflower County where Senator Eastland's plantation is. Eight Negro voters went to the place where the precinct meeting should have been held, the regular polling place. They tried to open the door of the Community House. It was locked. They called out. No one answered. Then at 10:05 A.M. the Negro voters convened the precinct meeting on the lawn of the Community House. A resolution was passed pledging support of the National Democratic Party. Delegates were elected for the county convention. After a short prayer and singing 'We Shall

Overcome,' the precinct meeting adjourned. The entire operation was filmed by CBS News, TV."

Affidavits of similar frustrated attempts throughout the state were presented to the Credentials Committee in Atlantic City to deal with the question of which delegates were legal—the Freedom Democrats or the traditional Democrats.

On June 19 in Oxford, Ohio, at the orientation session, William Kunstler (New York lawyer and father of one of the 300 volunteers present, Karen) announced the filing of a federal suit attacking, among other things, section 3107 of the Mississippi Code, which provided for the selection of the Democratic Presidential electors after the holding of the National Convention. This statute made it impossible for a traditional Democrat to give assurances that the candidates of the National Party would appear on a Mississippi ballot because the decision was in the hands of the Mississippi state convention, held after the National Convention.

Who was legal?

June 30, 1964, the platform of the Mississippi State Democratic Party was released. It was against everything: civil rights, poll-tax amendments, the United Nations, et cetera. It further made the determination of the legal delegation at Atlantic City easier by asserting, "We reject and oppose the platforms of both national parties and their candidates."

On July 2, Ella J. Baker sent a telegram to the Oregon state convention of Democrats asking for support in the seating fight. In the telegram was a quote of Governor Brown of California expressing approval of the support given to the Freedom Democrats by California: "I could not be more pleased. The traditional Democratic Party [of Mississippi] was so far out of tune with the National Democratic Party that it should not be allowed near the Convention Hall." (Governor Brown recanted from this position at the National Convention.) On July 5 word came back from Oregon pledging support for the Freedom Democrats. On July 6 the District of Columbia came out for support of the Freedom Democrats.

Then came the bogey man: Goldwater. The 1964 National Convention of the Republican Party selected Barry Goldwater as Presi-

dential nominee. The Presidential election was characterized then as a contest between "good and evil, Johnson and Goldwater, sanity and a madman." Goldwater's election to the Presidency of the United States was likened unto destroying the world. Northerners who were supporting the Freedom Democrats began a re-evaluation.

To beef up support within Mississippi for the challenge and to increase the freedom registration, Dr. Martin Luther King was brought into Mississippi for a five-day speaking tour. James Farmer (national director of CORE), Bayard Rustin (who calls himself the "Lone Wolf of Civil Rights"), Ella J. Baker, James Forman and Bob Moses of SNCC, and others gathered in Jackson while the Rev. King was there to have a "high-level" conference on the Atlantic City challenge.

The two most important items to be resolved were money to carry on the challenge and the organizing of the demonstrators. Pledges of some financial support were secured from all the civil rights groups represented at the meeting. When discussion began, Bayard Rustin was still insisting that he would marshal and organize the tens of thousands of demonstrators for the Convention. It is believed that later in the day there was a long-distance phone call to Rustin from a friend in Detroit. At the evening session he reversed his position. He began making impossible requests, such as putting both the securing of support for the challenge and the organization of the demonstrations under his control and placing the need for large sums of money under his exclusive direction. Though Bayard insisted that he hadn't fully rejected the idea of organizing the demonstrations and wanted to think it over for a few days, it was apparent that he was lost. The hour had grown late.

It was too late to marshal and organize large numbers of demonstrators. Bayard's decision—because so much reliance had been placed on him and because the time had run out—was a bitter revelation.

On Saturday, July 24, on the "Senate Cloakroom" television program, Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois projected the idea of seating both delegations from Mississippi and splitting the vote, as had been done in ten of twenty-seven challenges in the history of the Demo-

cratic National Convention. The Martin Luther King tour of the state was completed on the same date.

The days raced by until the eve of the Democratic Convention. President Lyndon B. Johnson and his advisers wrote a script to be followed at the "Johnson Convention." He would pretend to be undecided on a running mate, and this would give the unspectacular Convention some drama which might hold TV audiences.

The leading actors of the drama would be Hubert H. Humphrey (to make sure that the Alabama and Mississippi seating challenges were handled expeditiously) and the former Governor of Pennsylvania, David Lawrence, as the head of the Credentials Committee (which makes the decision as to who gets seated).

Making sure that the rules of the Convention could be bent, twisted, broken and discarded and that convenient new ones could be enacted to serve the purposes of the "Great Society" was the trusted Governor Carl Sanders of Georgia.

The end of the script had a climax that called for the Freedom Democrats to march into the Convention to the roll of drums and blare of trumpets to take seats as "honored guests" or "fraternal members" or anything except the "Mississippi delegation." After all, there was a fiery dragon named Goldwater that had to be slain.

The traditional Democratic Party of Mississippi came to the Convention with *certainty* in its favor:

1. The group knew that 3 of its delegates would be seated as the other 65 stalked out in feigned indignation at being asked to take an oath of loyalty to the Party.
2. The group knew that the Freedom Democratic Party would not be allowed as part of the Mississippi delegation.

This certainty had come from two sources. Governor Paul B. Johnson, in a private session, had informed the delegation of the phone call received from President Lyndon B. Johnson and then had proceeded to brag about the call to the press (*Jackson Daily News*, August 13, 1964).

The other source was Douglass Wynn of Mississippi, who was one of the delegates. Wynn's seven-year-old daughter has President Lyndon B. Johnson for a godfather. Wynn's father-in-law is Ed

Clark of Austin, Texas. Clark, an ardent friend of President Johnson and one of the most influential lobbyists in America, is reputed to be the puppeteer of six United States Senators.

In addition, it was known that Johnson was running scared: five delegations from the South had promised to walk out of the Convention if the Freedom Democrats were seated. Things were certain. Yet there was still a role that the traditional Mississippi Democrats had to play: they had to come to the Convention.

If no traditional Democrats had shown up, it would have been immeasurably more difficult for President Johnson to have justified *not* seating the Freedom Democrats. Millions of Negro voters and other liberals in key northern states would not have understood and might have made Election Day a "fishing day" by staying away from the polls.

In spite of the awesome power of President Johnson and the southern block of Democrats, the Freedom Democrats were not without some power. Firstly, they had an ironclad legal posture for being seated as the delegates for Mississippi, inasmuch as they had irrefutable legal evidence that

1. Negro voters in Mississippi (and most of the white) had been illegally denied access to the delegate-selection machinery of the Democratic party in Mississippi and all other political processes of the state. Freely and repeatedly the delegation of Freedom Democrats reminded everyone that for the National Convention to say that the traditional Democrats were "legal" was for the National Democratic Convention to endorse the fraud, violence and trickery used to keep Negroes out of the few precinct meetings held on June 16.
2. The traditional Democrats had systematically and consistently prevented Negro voter registration by every statute, custom and lynch rope available.
3. Under no circumstances would the traditional Mississippi Democrats support the National Party or the national candidates.

Secondly—for what it may have been worth—Freedom Democrats had the guilt of a nation on their side, arising out of centuries of slavery, exploitation and segregation. The discovery of the bodies of Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner on August 4 was still fresh

enough, when the Democratic National Convention opened, to be remembered.

Thirdly, the Freedom Democratic Party had the support of resolutions from 9 important Democratic Party delegations (including Michigan, California, New York and Oregon), 25 Democratic Congressmen (including Mrs. Edith Green, William F. Ryan, Philip Burton, James Roosevelt, Gus Hawkins and Robert W. Kastenmeier) and more than a score of vigorous supporters scattered about the Convention.

Fourthly, there was public focus. The news media hadn't bought the bit about President Johnson's not knowing who his Vice-Presidential candidate would be. For the news media the only issue seemed to be Mississippi, so they zeroed in on the Freedom Democrats.

Finally, there was determination. The Freedom Democrats were determined to get something meaningful out of the Convention, such as being seated as *representatives for Mississippi* in exchange for the position of peril that they had assumed by the mere act of coming to the Convention. (On August 13 the Attorney General of Mississippi had secured an injunction against the MFDP in the state courts. In addition, the promise had been made to jail the delegates if they went to Atlantic City.)

During the afternoon of Saturday, August 2, the curtain was raised. The grand drama began with the hearing of the Credentials Committee of the Convention in the Grand Ballroom of Convention Hall.

IX

Democratic National Convention

“Seek ye first the political kingdom
and all other things shall be added.”

—*President Kwame Nkrumah
of Ghana*

BEING A NEWSLESS DAY, relatively speaking, every major television network, every major newspaper and all of the important columnists of America were present. Every actor knew his part, save a few: the delegates of the Freedom Democratic Party of Mississippi, who were not about to play “make-believe.”

The testimony began. America stood still as a Mississippi truth unfolded from the eloquent tongues of its immediate victims. Aaron Henry spoke. The Rev. Edwin King spoke. And then came Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, and she shared with the world, the best she could with words, some of the indescribable horrors inflicted by traditional Mississippi Democrats when a Negro tries to vote.

Breaths grew short; each throat had that sort of choked feeling, as if one's heart was going to come out through it. Faces of men and women, blacks and whites, Credential Committee members and just plain spectators were washed in their own tears. Even the whispers of Mrs. Hamer's voice damned a nation, for in them you could hear and see Herbert Lee, Medgar Evers, James Chaney, Andy Goodman, Mickey Schwerner and a million bodies gulped by Mississippi rivers during three centuries. She told her story . . .

“ . . . They beat me and they beat me with the long flat blackjack.

I screamed to God in pain. My dress worked itself up. I tried to pull it down. They beat my arms until I had no feeling in them. After a while the first man beating my arm grew numb from tiredness. The other man, who was holding me, was given the blackjack. Then he began beating me. I can't . . .” Mrs. Hamer was sobbing.

In the White House there was panic.

Hurriedly President Johnson ordered his own television press conference. But the notice had been too short. By the time the cameramen had set up, Mrs. Hamer had almost finished. President Johnson went on national television and made some comments about some matter about poverty or something. Few can recall what he said; there was nothing that impressed one as being either important or urgent. But it was long. It did cut off Mrs. Rita Schwerner, widow of Mickey, and the others. But if the President had intended to keep the world from hearing the 45 minutes of testimony of the Freedom Democrats, he surely failed. Later in the evening the radio and television networks played the recorded and filmed testimony blocked by President Johnson's inane news conference. And the papers the following day told the story in print.

Thousands of telegrams, letters and calls poured like a torrential rain in to the members of the Credentials Committee.

The seven Negro members of the Credentials Committee (which included such persons as Mrs. Todd Duncan of Washington, D.C.) became “uncontrollable.” They, too, were indignant and angry, as were the magnificent lady from Oregon, Congresswoman Edith Green, and Congressman Kastenmeier.

“The best-laid plans of Presidents and Men often go astray.” That was the way that Joe Jordan characterized the hearing of Saturday, August 22, in a paraphrase of Robert Burns.

The script had to be rewritten because of that *awful* session the Freedom Democrats had conducted before the Credentials Committee. Something had to be done to create the impression of concession to the MFDP.

The Master Political Dramatist did rewrite the ending. The new script called for giving “delegate status” to two persons selected by Hubert H. Humphrey: they were Aaron Henry and the Rev. Edwin

King. While other delegates at the Convention would be the delegates of Maryland, California and so forth, these two hand-picked delegates of Humphrey from the 68 in the Freedom Democratic Party would be the delegates of a mystical land like Valhalla; they would be the delegates-at-large. To sweeten the pie, there would be an unenforceable resolution calling on southern Democratic parties to integrate their slates of Convention delegates, as is done in the northern states.

The marching into the Convention to the roll of drums and blare of the band was rewritten into the new ending. It was a *must* that the Freedom Democratic delegates make a public show of being grateful.

On Monday, August 24, in spite of a lot of hard selling by Joseph Rauh, Congressman Charles Diggs, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jack Pratt of the National Council of Churches, Congressman William Dawson, and a half a dozen others of similar mind, it became obvious that the Freedom Democratic delegation had come to be seated to represent Mississippi and not a place named "at-large."

The adamant position of the Freedom delegates was frightening. President Johnson demanded that people *follow leadership*—especially since he was the leader. The position that Senator Humphrey sought as Vice-Presidential candidate was being endangered. If the Freedom Democrats pushed successfully to the point of a floor fight on seating, or otherwise displeased the southern delegations, President Johnson appeared to have made it clear that he would select a man for Vice-President who had no liberal image or one who was a southerner like himself.

The early votes in the Credentials Committee made it certain that the Freedom Democrats would never be allowed to represent Mississippi by a decision of that committee. The thing feared was that the Freedom Democrats could muster enough support for a floor vote on seating them. To get the floor vote in the Convention, the Freedom Democrats needed 11 members of the Credentials Committee to sign a minority report calling for the seating of the MFDP. Then there were needed 8 delegations to call for a roll-call vote on the seating. The magic figures were 11 and 8.

The 8 was quickly taken care of. Walter Reuther, who was flown into Atlantic City on an emergency mission which tore him away from crucial UAW contract negotiations with the automobile industry, and Senator Humphrey quickly ascertained that the 8 delegations which the Freedom Democrats were counting on for a roll-call vote included Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the District of Columbia and Guam. A call was made. Governor Carl Sanders hurriedly had the Rules Committee of the Convention make a regulation that only delegations from states could ask for a roll-call vote.

By Tuesday, August 25, the matter of the 11 signatures of members of the Credentials Committee needed for a minority report calling for the seating of the Freedom Democrats was handled.

Joseph Rauh, lawyer for the Freedom Democrats, was also general counsel for the United Automobile Workers of America, whose president was Walter Reuther. The position as general counsel pays several tens of thousands of dollars per year. For reasons not known, when time came for signing a minority report, Rauh did not sign, although he had promised to do so repeatedly.

Congressman Charles Diggs, who, like Rauh, was a member of the Credentials Committee, wouldn't sign a minority report. The Michigan delegation to the Convention was furious and made strong accusations as to the reasons why Diggs didn't sign and otherwise sided with the wishes of President Johnson rather than those of the Freedom Democrats.

Martin Luther King changed. On Saturday, August 22, and on Sunday and Monday he had repeatedly called for the seating of the Freedom Democratic Party to represent Mississippi. With the aid of Bayard Rustin, the Messrs. Reuther, Humphrey and Johnson had caused the Rev. King, whose organization (SCLC) receives substantial contributions from organized labor, *to see the light*.

Other members of the Credentials Committee who supported the Freedom Democrats were promised no judgeships for their husbands; one was promised no poverty program in his Congressional district; another had his employer call him and remind him that continued support of the Freedom Democrats might be the loss of a government contract that the firm was seeking; another was told

that her job with a high official of the city of New York was not helped by her support of the Freedom Democrats.

The various messages from the master politicians got across. The support of the Freedom Democrats dwindled from 18 to 4 on the Credentials Committee.

Tuesday, August 25, was a sad day.

The nearly 100,000 miles of travel by members of the Washington office of the Freedom Democrats, the hundreds of telephone calls, the countless hours spent talking with Congressmen and delegations—both at home and in Atlantic City—were all for nought. The people on the Credentials Committee and in the delegations of the various states all had personal hopes, desires and ambitions. The Master Politician knew this. He reminded as many as were weak that to oppose his wishes would mean an end to those hopes, desires and ambitions.

With all of the actors back in place and following both the script and the leadership, the issue of who would be seated for Mississippi, which had been postponed until things had been arranged (a shrewd leader never allows a matter to come to a vote unless he is certain that the outcome is "desirable"), was placed back on the agenda of the Convention for Tuesday night, August 25. On a doubtful voice vote the recommendation of the Credentials Committee was "adopted" by the Convention.

But there was another scene to be played.

It involved a role to be enacted by the Freedom Party delegation. The delegates were supposed to be pleased, to be happy. They weren't. They wanted to represent Mississippi. If they couldn't be seated as the sole delegation from Mississippi, they wanted the plan proposed by Congresswoman Edith Green: to give the loyalty oath to both delegations and divide the vote equally among those who took it—which would have meant only three of the traditional Democrats in the Mississippi section until the first Negro delegate took his seat . . . and then there would have been no traditional Democrats, because not even for President Johnson could a Mississippi politician sit near a Negro.

Credentials Committee Report on Mississippi

ATLANTIC CITY, Aug. 25 (UPI)—Text of the Credentials Committee report on the Mississippi delegation case:

1. We recommend the seating as the delegates and alternates from Mississippi those members of the regular Democratic Party of Mississippi who subscribe to the following assurance:

We, the undersigned members of the Mississippi delegation to the 1964 Democratic National Convention hereby each formally assure the convention of our intention to support the convention's nominees in the forthcoming general election.

2. We recommend that the convention instruct the Democratic National Committee that it shall include in the call for the 1968 Democratic National Convention the following amended first paragraph:

It is the understanding that a State Democratic Party, in selecting and certifying delegates to the Democratic National Convention, thereby undertakes to assure that voters in the state, regardless of race, color, creed or national origin, will have the opportunity to participate fully in Party affairs, and to cast their election ballots for the presidential and vice presidential nominees selected by said convention, and for electors pledged formally and in good conscience to the election of these presidential and vice presidential nominees, under

the Democratic Party label and designation.

3. We recommend that the convention adopt the following resolution:

Resolved: That the chairman of the Democratic National Committee shall establish a special committee to aid the state Democratic parties in fully meeting the responsibilities and assurances required for inclusion in the call for the 1968 Democratic National Convention, said committee to report to the Democratic National Committee concerning its efforts and findings and said report to be available to the 1968 convention and the committees thereof.

4. We recommend that the members of the delegation of the Freedom Democratic Party, like the Democrats proposed, but not seated, as members of the Oregon, Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands delegations, be welcomed as honored guests of this convention.

5. Wholly apart from the question of the contest as to the delegates from Mississippi and in recognition of the unusual circumstances presented at the hearing, and without setting any precedent for the future, it is recommended that Dr. Aaron Henry, chairman, and the Reverend Edwin King, national committeeman-designate, of the Freedom Democratic Party, be accorded full delegate status, in a special category of delegates-at-large of this convention, to be seated as the chairman of the convention may direct.

From a United Press International release, Atlantic City, August 25, 1964; the text of the Credentials Committee report on the Mississippi delegation case.

The Freedom Democrats didn't want the "at-large" or "fraternal" status that was being offered.

"It's a token of rights on the back row that we get in Mississippi. We didn't come all this way for that mess again," said Mrs. Hamer.

Thus, on Tuesday night, August 25, when the Convention session began, when all was supposed to be happy and pretty, President Johnson and millions of other television viewers found a scene in which the three traditional Democrats were under the platform in the custody of a Presidential aide. Outside in the Mississippi section were sitting members of the Freedom Democratic Party. With their bodies they were telling the world that they didn't like the farce that had been planned for them. In the news media that night this MFDP assumption of the seats upstaged everything else that the Convention did. Rough members of a sergeant-at-arms force were summoned away from the delegation by a call reputed to have come directly from President Johnson. The effect on Negro voters of seeing Negroes bodily hauled out of the Convention—a Convention that the Negroes were risking death to attend—would have been disastrous.

Leadership wasn't being followed.

A troubled and angry MFDP delegation gathered at the Union Temple Baptist Church on Wednesday, August 26, at 10:00 A.M.

It was known that Aaron Henry, Martin Luther King, and Edwin King had agreed to the proposed "at-large" delegation plan and with Senator Humphrey's naming of the two delegates.

Again the total MFDP delegation's vote showed overwhelming rejection of the "at-large" status and then condemned the insulting spectacle of Hubert H. Humphrey purporting to pick representatives for the MFDP. And while this discussion and voting was going on, unknown to the delegation, seats in Convention Hall a few blocks away were being removed from the Mississippi section—save for three—in order to block another sit-in, which had the potential of explosively alienating Negro voters.

After much effort, Aaron Henry, who was personally anxious to take the at-large seat designated for him by the then Senator

Humphrey, got the other 63 Negro members and 4 white members of the delegation to hear speakers after lunch who favored acceptance of the plan adopted by the Democratic National Convention and rejected a dozen times by the MFDP.

It was a time for extreme action and heroic effort to get stubborn Mississippians to accept what had been decreed for them from Washington. Senator Humphrey was informed of the MFDP's further rejection and condemnation. President Johnson was alerted. Another upstaging could not be tolerated.

On the afternoon of Wednesday, August 26, the "Big Guns" poured the message on the MFDP delegates: "Follow leadership!" Bayard Rustin, after announcing that he had been sent to the Convention by Walter Reuther to give the Mississippi people the *message*, insisted that the Freedom Movement needed white allies. Therefore, he said, the MFDP should accept the "at-large" offer: "Be at large, but be." Senator Wayne Morse categorically said that the MFDP had won a "victory" and that the victory should be "accepted." Jack Pratt of the National Council of Churches did the same.

James Farmer (national director of CORE), embittered by the inner conflict between his conscience and what pressure was forcing him to do, spoke both for and against acting the role desired.

The Rev. Martin Luther King summoned all of his eloquence and attempted to convince the delegates that the world was in their hands: "This is the greatest decision you'll ever have to make in your lifetime. And the weight of this decision will affect not only what takes place in America, but throughout the world."

Speakers told the delegates that acceptance meant a grand ceremony of the MFDP delegates marching into the Convention with the eyes of the world upon them; that the chairman of the Convention would call out to the two delegates-at-large; that Aaron Henry would get a chance to say, "I, Aaron Henry of Clarksdale, Mississippi, and delegate-at-large, cast two votes for President Lyndon B. Johnson."

The spechmaking for acceptance ended. The 68 MFDP delegates

excluded everyone (visitors, friends, reporters and SNCC and CORE staff) and held a long, private caucus.

Again they rejected the script and the role written for them by President Johnson.

A phone call relaying the decision to the White House was made.

Contrary to his announced plans, contrary to all precedent, President Lyndon B. Johnson immediately decided to come into the Convention prior to his being nominated. The Freedom Democratic Party could not be permitted an evening of prime time of nationally televised interviews, during which they might tell all why the "at-large" status was unworthy of acceptance—even while there were people in Mississippi writing epitaphs for the delegates.

Again the MFDP delegates got into the Convention on Wednesday night with borrowed credentials. At the Mississippi section they found three traditional Mississippi Democrats surrounded by a score of suit-wearing men with shielded guns (*Newsweek* magazine said that they were FBI agents and Secret Service men). To the consternation of the "establishment," the delegates stood there for the rest of the proceedings. And they looked beautiful.

Even the tired, aging, 53-year-old boy wonder, Bayard Rustin, was moved to commend the Freedom delegates for not accepting the "back-of-the-bus" surrender that he had worked so hard to force upon them.

"I want to apologize to you people. I opposed a lot that went on here that you wanted. But when I think of those big, black, ugly and beautiful asses in the seats of those nice, lily-white, dainty, traditional Mississippi delegates, I'm happy!

"Yes. Go out into the streets of the nation and demonstrate. Not to keep Lyndon Johnson honest. But to make him less crooked."

The hundreds gathered on the boardwalk in front of Convention Hall for the final demonstration cheered Bayard's belated candor. Smiling and tired, Bayard bobbed his bushy head of gray hair a few times. And then he walked off beyond the view of the crowd into the dark of the night to pursue matters of politics, leaving behind a

once-vibrant conscience that he couldn't use in his practical endeavors.

It was reported that the southerners accepted the "at-large" status readily and laughed. The northern newspapers, almost without exception, praised the "at-large" plan. But the fear was that the stench might have been detected by Negro voters in key northern states, who might accept the position urged by the great comedian, Dick Gregory, who had said that if the Freedom Democratic Party were not seated, Negroes should go fishing on Election Day.

It was for this reason that so much effort was spent to get the Freedom Democrats to endorse what was done. Being denied this, the Democratic National Committee engaged the services of the Rev. Martin Luther King and Bayard Rustin to tour the larger urban communities of the North. Their mission was to encourage Negroes not to go fishing.

With regard to the Mississippi Convention challenge, there appeared to be three operative philosophical levels. One was the attitude of the southern delegates. Crudely stated, the position of the South was this: "Damn Johnson if the Freedom Democrats are seated representing Mississippi; our votes will go to the Republican Presidential nominee, Barry Goldwater." With this position they had power. No arrangement was made at the Convention that met their disapproval. Their strength came from their willingness to renounce. As usual, their outlook was practical. The type of challenge emerging from Mississippi could not be encouraged. There is no southern state (and few northern states) which doesn't exclude vast numbers from really participating in the machinery of party organization. Also, do not forget that most whites in Mississippi didn't get a chance to help select the delegates to the convention either.

Another operative philosophy was the one of the Humphrey-Bayard Rustin-Reuther-type group. Theirs seemed to be one of getting their objective accomplished, and "too bad that we'll have to run over everybody and every concept that gets in our way." This, too, is a powerful operating guide.

The third philosophical approach was that affecting the decisions of the Freedom Democrats, who seemed to be saying in everything

that they did at the Convention, "We are the legal and moral owners of the prestige and seats allocated at the Convention to the Democrats of Mississippi. We want those seats. But if we are refused them we will still go back to Mississippi and elsewhere and work to see that the national candidates and National Party are triumphant."

Had the Freedom Democrats possessed more power they would have been seated. They could be characterized as *not* having legal as well as moral force on their side only by a tortuous mind that could also assert that the government of Nazi Germany which destroyed millions of lives (in a shorter period than was done in Mississippi) was "legal."

The chairman of the traditional Democrats of Mississippi, Bidwell Adams, in so many words admitted this: "They could seat them *if they wanted to*. They could seat a dozen dead dodos brought there [the National Democratic Convention] in a silver casket and nobody could do anything about it."

With only slight variations, the year 1964 suggests that there will be a similar challenge from the Freedom Democrats of the seating of the traditional Democrats at the National Convention in 1968. The signs point to an expansion. There will be, it appears, challenges by Freedom Democrats from Georgia, Alabama and Arkansas in addition to Mississippi.

So be it.

True to their promise, the Mississippi Freedom Democrats worked for the national candidates when they returned home. True to the MFDP's predictions and proofs, the traditional Democrats carried their state for the Republican Presidential candidate, Goldwater. True to the pattern of the Freedom Democratic Party, a mock election was conducted simultaneously with the holding of the Presidential elections.

Several hundred northern students volunteered for the period of October 20 through November 4, 1964, to assist in that election. The political program of the summer had not ended. A telegram from Laurence Guyot on October 30, 1964, to the national chairman of the Democratic Party gave evidence that the Mississippi reaction had not ended either.

Democratic National Convention

MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM DEMOCRATIC PARTY
52½ SHORT STREET
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

Chairman, Laurence Guyot
State Executive Committee
Mr. Lee Dilworth, Holly Springs
Mrs. Victoria Jackson Gray, Hattiesburg
Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, Ruleville
Mrs. Annie Devine, Canton
Miss Peggy Conner, Hattiesburg

October 30, 1964

John Bailey
Democratic National Committee Chairman
Washington, D.C.

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party has been actively campaigning for President Lyndon B. Johnson and Hubert Humphrey, seeking votes both in the regular election and in our own Freedom Vote—an election designed to give disfranchised Negroes in the state an opportunity to make their choice for political office known. This telegram is in protest of the often brutal actions of private citizens and law enforcement officials that occur in a closed society. In the following cases we witness not only the oppression of a minority group, but the oppression of a minority opinion. We request that the Democratic Party conduct an investigation of the following incidents and/or refer us to the appropriate body for actions against persons committing the following unfair campaign practices and illegal acts suppressing political organizing in Mississippi.

Laurence Guyot

BELZONI

Oct. 1: Six campaign workers arrested on charges of "criminal syndicalism" while distributing registration leaflets.

Oct. 15: Four more campaign workers arrested on "criminal syndicalism." Bond for eight of them totaled \$16,000.

INDIANOLA

Oct. 20: FDP volunteer worker kicked and hit in face by local white man.

Photographer for SNCC, in the city to photograph FDP activity, beaten outside city by whites.

Oct. 21: Insurance canceled on church after it was used for campaign meeting.

Oct. 22: Small plane passed several times over FDP rally of 250 people, dropping flare and explosives.

Oct. 26: FDP volunteer worker hit with fists in face at courthouse while escorting 4 local Negroes to apply for voter registration test.

Oct. 28: Tear-gas bomb thrown through window of home of FDP supporter lodging volunteer workers. Arson attempt at SNCC freedom-school building which has been used for FDP meetings.

Oct. 29: Police used night sticks to break up FDP rally on lawn of freedom school, beating 2 Negro women, one of whom is an amputee. 13 arrested for "resisting an officer."

TCHULA

Oct. 24: Home of Hartman Turnbow, FDP delegate to the Democratic National Convention in August, 1964, and active state-wide campaigner, shot into. 4 bullets lodged in wall.

JACKSON

Oct. 24: 7 persons arrested while passing out LBJ-Humphrey leaflets in downtown area. Charged with "distributing leaflets without a permit." Bond for \$100 each.

LAMBERT

Oct. 20: 5 campaign workers run out of town by 2 whites as they were canvassing for the Johnson-Humphrey ticket.

MARKS

Oct. 21: Campaign worker forced off highway, beaten by 4 whites and urinated upon: suffered concussion.

PASCAGOULA

Oct. 26: Two campaign workers arrested on false traffic charges.

COLUMBUS

Oct. 26: Campaign worker arrested for "disorderly conduct" and "distributing leaflets without a permit" while passing out Johnson leaflets.

COLUMBUS

Oct. 28: Campaign worker arrested on 2 false traffic charges.

McCOMB

Oct. 23: Campaigning clergymen arrested for "distributing leaflets without a permit" while passing out Voting literature. 13 campaign workers

Democratic National Convention

arrested for "operating a food-handling establishment without a permit" at private home used to lodge workers.

MAGNOLIA

Oct. 26: 29 persons arrested for trespassing in parking lot of Pike County Courthouse as they debarked from cars to make applications to register to vote. \$100 bond for each.

Oct. 27: 14 persons again arrested on same charges at same place while attempting to apply to register to vote. Campaign worker arrested while attempting to communicate with jailed person. 6 people physically abused while in jail.

RULEVILLE

Oct. 24: Rocks thrown through window of only Negro merchant in town who dared to post Democratic posters.

Oct. 29: Shots fired through same window riddling pictures of Johnson, Humphrey, and local candidate.

HOLLY SPRINGS

Oct. 16: Cross burned before home of newly registered voter.

CANTON

Oct. 27: Campaign worker arrested on false traffic charges.

QUITMAN

Oct. 28: 3 campaign workers arrested on false charge of car theft.

BATESVILLE

Oct. 26: Firecrackers set off at campaign headquarters.

TALLAHATCHIE

Oct. 26: 2 campaign workers threatened by policemen, had gun pulled on them as they were talking in café.

There is a saying that "there's no rest for the wicked."

On November 28, 1964, in Washington, D.C., the Freedom Democratic Party embarked on another project to disturb what tranquillity Mississippi may have left: a challenge of the seating of five Mississippi Congressmen elected, by reason of systematic exclusion of Negroes from the electorate.

As various representatives of northern groups, gathered to support this challenge, stood up at the November 28 meeting to give their names (such persons as Jesse Gray of the Harlem rent-strike group, Al Raby of the Freedom Democrat clubs of Chicago,

Cleveland Students for a Democratic Society, and Noel Day of Boston), a tone of increased militancy emerged. Missing were groups with strong ties to the Johnson Administration, such as the NAACP, Martin Luther King's SCLC, the Urban League, and CORE.

The challenge idea, as described to the group by lawyers Ben Smith of New Orleans and Arthur Kinoy of New York, seemed so obvious that it's a wonder that civil rights groups had not employed the challenge before. Under the provisions of Title 2, United States Code, Sections 201 through 226, governing the procedure, any person who has run for office and been defeated can invoke the challenge:

Section 201. Whenever any person intends to contest an election of any Member of the House of Representatives of the United States, he shall, within thirty days after the result of such election shall have been determined by the officer or board of canvassers authorized by law to determine the same, give notice, in writing, to the Member whose seat he designs to contest, of his intention to contest the same, and, in such notice, shall specify particularly the grounds upon which he relies in the contest. (R.S. 105.)

As projected on November 28, 1964, the petitions of challenge were formally filed on December 4, 1964 (the same day that Sheriff Lawrence Rainey, Deputy Cecil Price and 19 other white Mississippians were arrested and charged with killing the 3 civil rights workers, only to have the charges dismissed a few days later by United States Commissioners at preliminary hearings).

The next steps consisted of Congressmen friendly to the MFDP (among them William F. Ryan of New York, Phillip Burton of California, John Conyers of Michigan, and Adam C. Powell of New York) challenging (on the opening day of Congress, January 4, 1965) the right of the five Mississippi representatives to be sworn in and to occupy seats pending the determination of the challenge by the Subcommittee on Elections and Privileges of the House of Representatives. One third of the House, 149 Congressmen voted with the MFDP to unseat the Mississippi Congressmen-elect.

After that, the teams of lawyers went to Mississippi armed with federal subpoena power and gathered evidence of terror and other

devices to exclude Negroes from voting in the state. And then both sides submitted such evidence as they had gathered along with a brief to the Subcommittee on Elections and Privileges for a determination of who shall sit.

Thus the summer of 1964 rolls onward.

For selfish reasons, many northern Congressmen, as prejudiced as those from Mississippi, are giving the Congressional challenge of the MFDP valuable support. These Congressmen seek through the MFDP challenge to effectuate reforms in the seniority system, which gives awesome power to the Southerners over the government of the United States. The northern Congressmen aided because they want some of that same power.

So be it.

Thus the Freedom Democratic Party of Mississippi, which arose out of a mock political action, is now making a *mockery* of the fraudulent nature of the Democratic Party of Mississippi, which has the key to what is known to be a "closed society." Regardless of the outcome of the continuing programs of the MFDP, it is certain that the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party is insisting itself into a position of prominence in the realms of conscious modern American History.