

LETTER FROM JACKSON

TO people who happen to be admirers of Spanish Civil War literature, Jackson as the headquarters of the Mississippi Summer Project is likely to conjure up visions of Madrid as the capital of the Spanish Loyalists. Physically, Jackson could hardly look less like Madrid, but the Summer Project—a statewide program of voter registration and other civil-rights activities which is being carried out by some six hundred volunteers and some one hundred paid workers—is so thoroughly caught up in a tangle of frenetic planning and propagandizing that a reader of George Orwell and Ernest Hemingway half expects to come across military strategists mapping out campaigns against mountain villages or to see clusters of ideologists arguing and plotting in small, dark bars, their conversations occasionally interrupted by a stray bomb. One difference, of course, is that the Council of Federated Organizations, or COFO—the amalgam of civil-rights groups that runs the Summer Project—does not actually control even the part of Jackson where it is permitted to exist, and there are constant reminders of who does. A number of editorialists and columnists on the Jackson daily news-

papers are not merely segregationists but segregationists of the type who are inclined to indicate their position by referring to Martin Luther King as “the Rev. Dr. Extremist Agitator Martin Luther King, Jr.,” or by suggesting that President Johnson’s theme song should be “The High Yellow Rose of Texas,” or by telling cannibal jokes; the community bulletin board of a local radio station occasionally includes among reports of rummage sales and church suppers the announcement that Americans for the Preservation of the White Race will hold its weekly meeting that evening and “all interested white people are invited to attend;” the chatty gray-haired lady in charge of a local bookstore, whose inventory appears to begin with the writings of the John Birch Society and move to the right, is available for political arguments with the civil-rights workers she refers to amiably as “those COFO things;” one can telephone Dial for Truth, a recorded announcement by the Jackson Citizens Council of the evils that race-mixing has brought upon the world during the previous week; and the Mississippi Numismatic Exchange, Inc., has a sign in its window reading, “Kennedy Half Dollars 25¢. That’s All We Think They’re


Worth!” (The sign says in smaller letters that the case that goes along with one costs fifty cents.)

Still, Jackson, which prides itself on maintaining law and order, has been relatively careful about protecting civil-rights workers, and there has not been enough civil-rights action within the city limits to provide what COFO people tend to call a confrontation; all in all, the city is more of a communications-and-planning center than a scene of battle. At the COFO headquarters, a storefront office on Lynch Street, in the Negro business district, efficient white girls in cotton print dresses decorate the walls daily with fresh “incident reports” listing arrests or beatings of COFO workers in other parts of the state, but whenever the stray bomb lands—as on the second day of my visit, when two workers were beaten, though not seriously, just a few blocks from the COFO office—the first reaction is that somebody must have broken a truce or wandered into a demilitarized zone by mistake. At the office, COFO workers in overalls and work shirts who have come into Jackson on errands from small towns in the Delta stroll in and out, and members of the office staff shuttle back and forth incessantly between a row of typewriters and a row of telephones. On Farish Street, in another part of the Negro business district, two groups of lawyers use offices across the street from one another—each on the top floor of a drab two-story building—to deal with the litigation brought on by the constant civil-rights arrests. In an office nearby, the National Council of Churches, which has provided ministers, lawyers, and the training facilities for the Summer Project, regularly holds orientation sessions for new arrivals, and a group of respectable-looking clergymen regularly watch quietly as a COFO worker demonstrates how to protect one’s kidneys when knocked down. (“Is it considered permissible to get in a punch or two and then run?” a young minister asked the day I was there. “How good a runner are you?” the COFO demonstrator asked in reply.) Over in the white business district, workmen are installing an interior staircase in the expanded F.B.I. office, which now occupies one floor



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parts of it just carry on the trend toward federal dictatorship."

"You sound like a good Goldwaterite," said King, with a slight smile. "Are you going to vote for Goldwater?"

"Yes, I expect I will," the young man said.

"It's too bad you're going to back a loser, because I'm afraid we're going to hand him a decisive defeat in November." King's tone was light; he might have been joking with a long-time neighbor who had always been a member of the opposing political party.

"I've voted for losers before," said the young man.

King turned back to his reading, and Vivian said, "What do you mean by federal dictatorship?"

The white man didn't seem anxious to take on a fresh adversary, but he replied, "I think everything should be done at the lowest level of government."

"How about all the federal hospitals? The roads?" said Vivian. "You say you want the federal government to stay out of everything unless it has to do it. That's why you have those hospitals and roads in Georgia, because Georgia was too poor to pay for them. Do you know how much more Mississippi takes from the federal government per person than it puts in? You didn't start talking about federal dictatorship until it came to race—"

"Are you asking me a question or making a speech?" said the young man.

"Both," Vivian said.

King looked up from his paper and smiled across at the young man. "We're all preachers, you see," he explained, and then turned to discuss something with Mrs. Cotton as the young man was making a point to Vivian.

"You must be talking about Toynbee's book," said Vivian, and he launched into a rapid-fire series of questions about Toynbee's theories on race.

"There's no need to debate this," the young man said finally, and he began to look out the window. At Montgomery, he walked off the plane.

"What do you think of that?" King asked, shaking his head, as the white man left. "Such a young man, too. Those are the people who are rallying to Goldwater. You can't get to him. His mind has been cold so long there's nothing that can get to him."

The young man returned to the plane before it left Montgomery, but, with a quick, embarrassed smile, he walked past King and the others and settled in a rear seat.

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Lunch was served between Montgomery and Meridian, and afterward Lee went to sleep and Young crossed the aisle to talk with Vivian about arrangements for that night. "I called the Justice Department today, and they said they think we should go back to Jackson after the meeting," he said.

"I don't like to have Dr. King on the road at night," Vivian replied.

"Apparently, Greenwood is the kind of place now where a mob might form," said Young. "They came right into the Negro neighborhood a few months ago to get the kids at the S.N.C.C. office."

"I never know if the Justice Department knows something it's not telling us," said Vivian. "But I hate to be on the road."

"Even with a state-patrol escort?"

"That state patrol isn't a patrol," Vivian said.

"I hear they were pretty good with the congressmen who went down there," said Young.

"Well, maybe so."

"Well, let's see what the mood is when we get there," Young said in conclusion. He walked across the aisle, lowered the back of his seat, and soon went to sleep. In front of him, King was engrossed in a news magazine.

A NUMBER of the white Mississippians who do not consider COFO workers Communists or beatniks—and they are clearly in the minority—believe that the presence of people who *look* like Communists or beatniks is enough to alarm the residents of a small, churchbound, isolated Mississippi town, even if it is not the sort of town whose sheriff ordinarily shows his alarm by beating up strangers. Mississippians have given a good deal of attention to the appearance of the COFO workers—who favor overalls, old shirts, and, in some cases, beards—and particularly to the appearance of the white volunteers. Although it is true that the people attracted to the Summer Project include some who would qualify as beatniks in Mississippi, where the word is defined broadly, the great majority of the volunteers are white college students who tend to dress the way their hosts dress. As it happens, COFO is, for all practical purposes, a project of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (the participation of the other national civil-rights organizations involved—the Congress of Racial Equality, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference—ranges from limited

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to nominal), so the style-setters are the staff members of S.N.C.C., which may once have been a coat-and-tie organization but is so no longer. With their overalls, S.N.C.C. field workers often wear the flat-topped, broad-brimmed straw hats that are popular among rural Negroes in Mississippi; James Forman, the Negro executive secretary of S.N.C.C., who has set up headquarters in Greenwood for the summer, is usually seen in blue jeans; and the founder and director of the Summer Project, a twenty-nine-year-old Negro S.N.C.C. worker named Robert Moses, who has been in Mississippi for three years, wears work pants and a T shirt even when he is in New York trying to raise money. What has been obscured by all the talk about the volunteers' being beatniks is that the dress of the COFO workers is really quite significant as an indication of how deeply the protest movement has changed in the few years since Negro students—some of them the same ones who are now involved in COFO—sat at dingy dime-store lunch counters dressed in freshly pressed three-button suits. Moses has remarked, "This movement is pointed in a different direction—not toward the downtown white but toward the rural Negro, not toward acceptance by the white community but toward the organization of political and other kinds of expression in the Negro community, or really toward the organization of a Negro society. And the dress is a symbol of that."

"Basically, we're dealing with poor people, and these are the people we identify with," Forman has explained. "It even affects our salary scale. One reason it's so low is just lack of money, but another reason is that we think you can't come out from a nice hotel every day to work with these people and then go back at night. Besides, in Mississippi, as a practical matter, you have to look like a rural Negro in order to get to talk to a rural Negro. And then we have to move a lot, and there's no use wearing a coat and tie if you're likely to end up sleeping on the floor. Another thing that's operating here, too, consciously or unconsciously, is: Why should we have to comb our hair and put on a coat and tie to get what are basically our rights? The student movement was positive, and without it we couldn't have had this, but it was also defensive—to show people we were clean. This is a different game. Also, there's a certain mystique about the dress, a certain morale factor. Maybe we've overdone



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it; it's almost a uniform now. A lot of this summer's volunteers went out and bought blue denim shirts and overalls. They thought they had to have them."

The attitude toward clothing has its counterpart in other phases of the Summer Project. In 1960, the Atlanta sit-in movement—which, admittedly, was even more middle-class than the movements in most cities—avoided association with CORE, partly because of a belief that it was too far left politically. COFO, against the advice of many of its Northern-liberal supporters, and after a good deal of internal debate, decided to accept help from the National Lawyers Guild—which is sometimes accused of being pro-Communist—because its leaders believed that the need for competent lawyers was desperate enough to make the loss of Northern-liberal support worth risking in order to get them. (It was partly in response that the Northern liberals sent lawyers of their own, whose help COFO was also happy to accept.) The Freedom Houses that COFO has established in a number of communities throughout the state to lodge its workers, and the other accommodations it has arranged in private homes, are usually interracial and unchaperoned, and the COFO answer to suggestions that this might be bad strategy is that Mississippi does not have a renters' market in Freedom Houses and it is more important to send as many workers as possible to whatever houses are available than to worry about antagonizing local whites, who are likely to be antagonistic anyway. "When I first came down here, I walked down the street to the courthouse with two local Negroes, and some people tried to beat my brains out," Moses says. "If you get the most extreme reaction to the most innocent move, you might as well do what you want. This isn't an army. We can't call up people in the field one day and say now the Communist issue will be imposed, and call up another day and say now the dress-up-and-clean-up issue will be imposed, or now the white-girl issue will be imposed. These people are risking their lives. They have to make their own decisions, and they tend to emphasize their involvement rather than disguise it. We really look upon all these things—the political arguments of the thirties and the forties, the impressions of the whites—as impositions from the outside."

At the heart of S.N.C.C.'s lack of concern with the impressions that its people make is the fact that its interest



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is not in having Negroes accepted into Mississippi society but in changing Mississippi society; its approach is—in the pure sense of the word, rather than in the sense more common here this summer—radical. The decision to begin with the most impenetrable state, by concentrating on Mississippi, was itself radical. The S.N.C.C. approach since 1961—when the organization, then almost dormant, decided to hire full-time field workers rather than merely to coordinate the activities of college students—has been split between direct action and voter registration, sometimes combined to produce what Forman calls “community mobilization.” S.N.C.C. was convinced from the outset that Mississippi had to be cracked, but soon discovered that direct action, which ran into a stone wall of high bails and severe jail sentences, was not the right method of cracking it. (Today, Jackson businessmen need have no fear of COFO’s demonstrating in restaurants. As a matter of strategy, S.N.C.C. leaders prefer to keep the Mississippi conflict based on the most fundamental Constitutional right—the right to vote—and as a matter of philosophy they do not consider restaurant integration particularly relevant in Mississippi; in fact, they do not even patronize the restaurants that have desegregated under the civil-rights law. “Sure we could go to the desegregated restaurants,” Moses says. “But could the Jackson Negro who might get fired for it go there? And how about the Negro who makes fifteen dollars a week?”) It was also in 1961 that Moses—an intense, soft-spoken, and self-effacing young man, who graduated from Hamilton College, got a Master’s degree in philosophy from Harvard, and had been teaching mathematics at the Horace Mann School in New York—went South to see what he could do to help. Working as a S.N.C.C. field secretary, Moses moved from one city to the next until he found a place where there was no established Negro leadership to resent him as an outsider; that turned out to be rural southwest Mississippi. At that time, some S.N.C.C. leaders believed that the Justice Department was advising concentration on voter registration to divert civil-rights groups from the more explosive field of direct action, but Moses discovered that, as he later said, “in Mississippi voter registration was itself an act of confrontation,” and one that could eventually result in the most fundamental changes.

So far, in Mississippi, the confrontation has continued to be more significant

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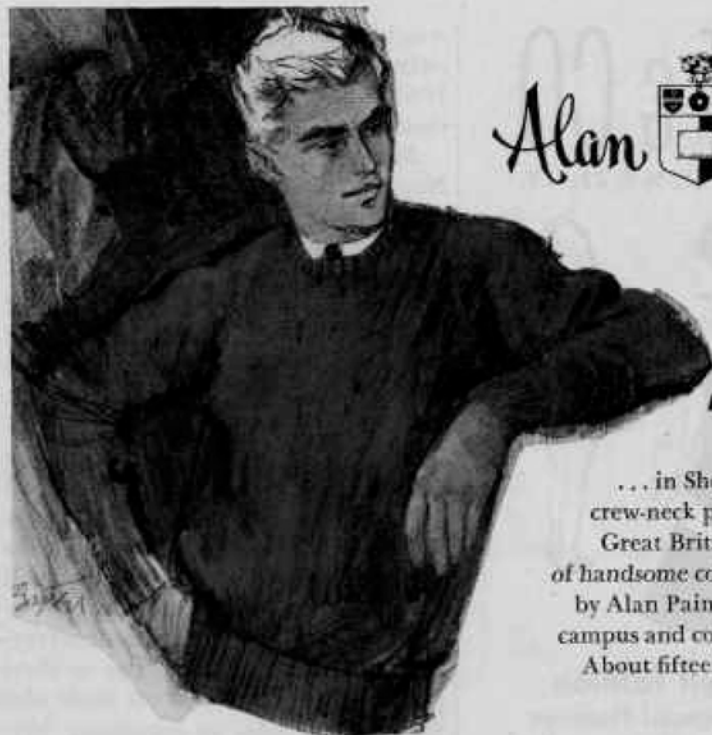


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than the registration. The simplest way to misunderstand COFO is to think of it as a project whose primary aim is to achieve a gradual increase in the Negro vote. Because of Mississippi's complicated literacy tests, the fear and apathy of its Negroes, and the range of intimidation available to its whites, COFO, at its current pace, will never register enough Negroes in the state to make any difference. In his speeches throughout Mississippi, Martin Luther King, in calling for federally appointed marshals to register voters in some counties, pointed out that for all the extraordinary efforts of the past three years, even at slightly better than the present rate, it would take a hundred and thirty-five years to register half the state's eligible Negro voters. The Voter Education Project—a coordinated voter-registration effort supported by foundation grants and administered by the respected Southern Regional Council—supported S.N.C.C.'s Mississippi registration drive for two years and then withdrew, on the ground that an organization committed to registering Negro voters would never be able to justify the expenditure of any money in Mississippi. The organization's second annual report declared, "V.E.P. has only been able to add 3,871 voters to the rolls in Mississippi during the past two years, a figure lower than the results from a single small city like Brunswick or Decatur, Georgia, or Winston-Salem, North Carolina. . . . We only hope that the situation improves before V.E.P. goes out of existence, but it will not change appreciably without massive federal action." Not only is it difficult to get Negroes registered in Mississippi but it is almost impossible even to find out how many Negroes have been registered; information is so skimpy that the figure usually quoted for Negro registration—twenty-eight thousand,



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which many people believe is an overestimate—has as its original source a 1955 University of Mississippi Master's thesis.

Moses is interested in registering Negroes, and still more interested in breaking through their fear enough to convince them that they should try to register. Most of all, though, having found that in almost any town a small group of Negroes could be built around voting, he sees voting registration as a means of organizing a society. Arguing that "you can't have a political revolution in a vacuum," he maintains that without organizing themselves and creating leaders of their own Negroes in Mississippi will not be able to use the vote effectively when it comes, and will also never be able to help themselves socially and economically. Almost everything that COFO does has two or three purposes, in addition to the basic idea that there is value in organizing Mississippi Negroes and "shaking up the state" no matter what the purpose. The Freedom Schools set up by COFO in some thirty Mississippi communities may teach Negro teen-agers enough civics and English to help them pass the voting test someday, but they also provide a means of improving the teen-agers' pitiful education, of permitting them, for the first time, some freedom of inquiry, and of developing leaders who are not afraid to lead. (A large percentage of S.N.C.C.'s Mississippi staff is composed of young people who have been recruited over the past three years by Moses and others during the organizing of Mississippi communities.) The Freedom Democratic Party is partly a means of demonstrating how many Negroes would vote if they were permitted to, partly a means of inspiring Negroes to vote, partly a means of teaching them the rudiments of political structure, and, inevitably, partly a means of just organizing. This constant organizing of lower-class Negroes means that the civil-rights movement, which until the past two or three years was largely a middle-class movement in the South, is now much more deeply concerned with social and economic problems. COFO has established community centers that are basically social-work centers, and it has a branch, called Federal Programs, that investigates discrimination in the distribution of federal funds and also tries to show Negroes how to get the federal aid that they are entitled to. Among S.N.C.C. workers, "bourgeois" is widely used as a term of insult.

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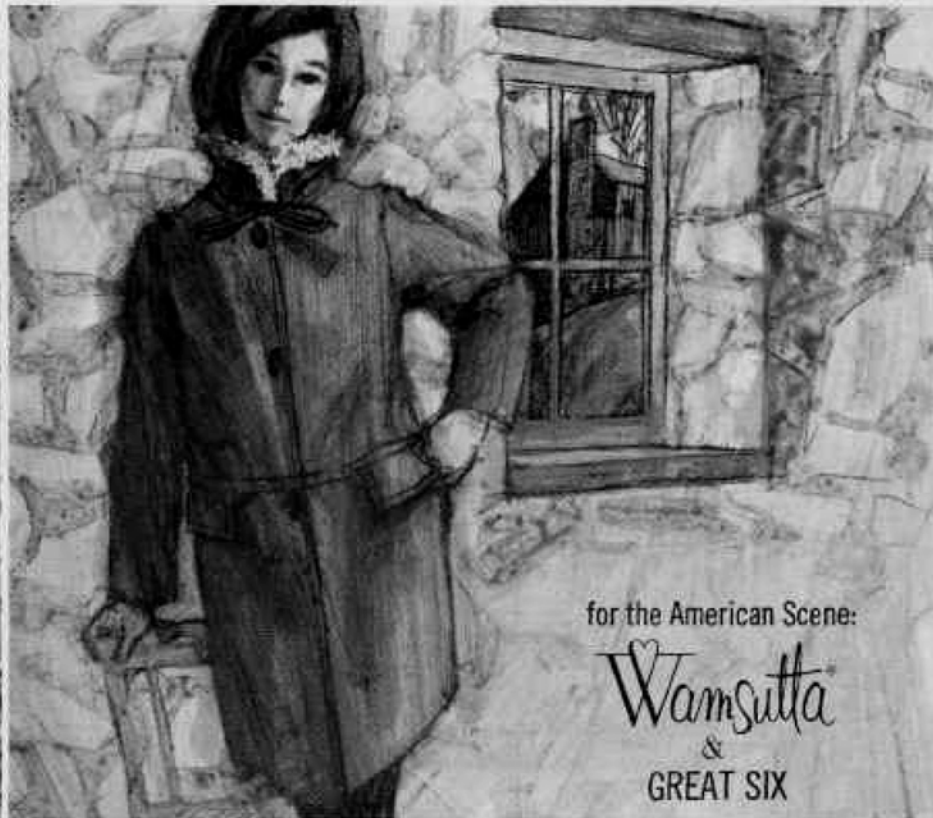
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Moses, who describes himself as merely an organizer and seems to have no interest in being a "civil-rights leader." Many of those who work with him consider him, quite simply, a saint. "You should hear him talk to some of these people," one of them told me. "I heard him in Ruleville once talking to a church full of farm laborers. He said, 'This spring, you're going to see a plane overhead and something is going to come out of the back, and that will be weed-killer, and it will kill all the weeds in the cotton field. That means that nobody will be chopping cotton this spring. Then, this fall, you're going to see a machine go up and down the rows of cotton, and that will be an automatic cotton-picker. And that means there will be nobody picking cotton this fall. That airplane and that cotton-picker together are automation. Now, everybody say "Automation." "Automation" means that a lot of people won't be eating this winter. But don't go to Chicago, because you won't be eating there, either. So we'll set up a food program to hold you for a while, and we'll organize and see what we can do.'"

After three years of such efforts, Moses does not have to be told that any significant improvement in either the economic or the political lot of Mississippi Negroes is going to require changes from the outside. The Summer Project was set up as one way to go about getting them. In the eyes of some of the S.N.C.C. leaders, the Project, which grew out of the participation of Yale and Stanford students in a mock election last fall, had certain drawbacks. There were fears of efficient, well-educated Northern whites' taking over the movement, of undermining the painfully built self-confidence of Mississippi Negroes through receiving help from whites, and of a strong backlash when the volunteers left. Countering these fears was a realization not only of all the work that five or six hundred volunteers could do but of the remarkable opportunity that the Summer Project presented for drawing the rest of the country into some involvement with Mississippi rather than a casual dismissal of the state as hopeless. Over the past year or two, S.N.C.C. leaders have found that the personal involvement of Northern whites—and particularly of well-educated, well-connected Northern whites—creates a pressure that would otherwise be missing. "We've operated in the past three years on the theory that the two things



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the local segregationists don't want are more federal involvement in any way at all and more public focus," Forman says. "Our problem is how to get the government to do what it's supposed to do. How can you get the Justice Department to press certain suits, for instance? One way is to make a lot of noise about the fact that they're not doing it, create a public consensus, get people to call in about it, and make it easier for the government to act. It's a question of balancing opposing forces."

Federal involvement—or federal intervention, or federal presence—is a much discussed subject in Jackson, and most people close to COFO believe that what its leaders are divided over is not whether or not federal involvement is desirable but simply what form it should take and what should be done to get it. Almost everybody in COFO denies any desire to see federal military occupation, and it is often pointed out that having a hundred and fifty F.B.I. agents in the state this summer, instead of a mere fifteen or so, even if they keep insisting that they are not there to protect anybody, is a huge increase in federal presence. The theory advanced by some Northern columnists and editorialists after the disappearance of the three murdered civil-rights workers in Philadelphia that the summer volunteers are being used as unwitting martyrs to provoke federal intervention infuriates even Moses, whose composure is ordinarily awesome. Having been in Mississippi for three years, virtually by himself and almost completely ignored, Moses is understandably irritated at the implication that he is a Machiavelian who sits in an office somewhere coldly sending innocents to the slaughter. COFO leaders point out that the Summer Project volunteers were repeatedly warned ahead of time of the dangers they would be facing, that they are not sent to places where violence is considered to be what Moses calls "repeatable" (the southwest area of the state, around Natchez, is such an area), and that a good deal of time is spent in setting up elaborate security arrangements. Still, they acknowledge that protection for Negroes in Mississippi is likely to be provided only when whites are involved and that ordinary pressures, such as publicizing incidents and writing to congressmen, would probably not have brought in the F.B.I. if the murders had not occurred. No sophisticated study of public opinion is needed to establish the fact that in the United States, North or South, a white life is considered to be of more

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value than a Negro life. In the mimeographed newspaper published by the COFO Freedom School in Holly Springs, a local girl wrote, "When we heard about the three freedom workers missing we were hurt but not shocked because many of our people have come up missing and nothing was said or done about it. Ever since I can remember I have been told of such cases from my people. But never have I heard it said on the news or over the T.V. or radio."

In discussing federal involvement, S.N.C.C. people tend to go no further with specific suggestions than Forman's statement that the government ought to do "what it's supposed to do." Moses says, "It's not our function to decide what form federal pressure should take; it's our function to holler loud, and that's what we do. It's a matter of whether Americans have the right to vote. I don't see how the country can come out with a negative answer—unless Goldwater gets in. We want to demonstrate to the Negro community, the country, the federal government. The presence of the F.B.I. in Mississippi is a big step. If they're not able to maintain control, the symbolic presence of marshals may be needed in the worst counties. The point is that the fact of the terror is out in the open, and the country has to do something about that." Moses believes that a breakthrough could come through litigation that would eventually result in a court ruling supporting S.N.C.C.'s thesis of "One Man, One Vote." He has particular faith in a favorable decision on the case of U.S. v. Mississippi, a suit that has been instituted by the Justice Department and that would result in the elimination of most of the legal obstacles to Negro registration. Moses has also been heartened by a recent decision in Panola County, where a federal judge invoked what is known as "the freeze theory" for the first time, ordering the county registrar to ignore the prescribed voting tests for Negroes for a period of a year, on the ground that the tests had been ignored for a number of years in the registration of whites. Favorable action on U.S. v. Mississippi would take at least a year—it is now on appeal to the Supreme Court after being dismissed by a three-judge federal court in Mississippi—and freeze-theory rulings would have to be based on evidence in eighty-two separate suits, one for each of Mississippi's eighty-two counties. Moses seems prepared to wait—despite the idealism



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and part of another of the new First Federal Savings & Loan Building, and is still in the unpacking stage, with crates on the floor and pictures of J. Edgar Hoover leaning against the wall. At the state Capitol, a few blocks to the north, where a statue of Governor (and Senator) Theodore Bilbo, the late racist, dominates the ground floor, and vividly tinted portraits of Mississippi's two Miss Americas are enshrined in the rotunda, investigators for the State Sovereignty Commission, the agency charged with preserving segregation, go through Negro newspapers, civil-rights literature, and the *Worker* in order to keep track of which Left Wingers are where. All in all, there are so many visitors in town that it is practically impossible to rent a car, and the provision of restaurant and hotel accommodations for the visitors has become a minor industry. Under these circumstances, a conversation about the Catalan separatists or the anarchists of the P.O.U.M. might not sound out of place, but instead the visitors talk about S.N.C.C. (called "Snick" and standing for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), or the National Council (of Churches), or the L.C.D.C. (Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee), or the (National) Lawyers Guild, or the A.P.W.R. (Americans for the Preservation of the White Race), or the Citizens Council, or the Klan.

JACKSON has never stood apart from the rest of Mississippi the way Atlanta has stood apart from Georgia, say, or New Orleans from Louisiana. Traditionally, it has merely been a larger town than the other towns in the state, and not until after the Second World War was it very much larger. In 1940, it had a population of sixty-two thousand. Now, however, with a population of a hundred and fifty thousand and with ambitions for further expansion, Jackson is the logical place to expect to see any significant indications of moderation on the race issue in Mississippi—not because the capital has ever been particularly liberal compared to the rest of the state but simply because it now has the most to lose through the chaos that total defiance of federal desegregation provisions could bring. Such indications appeared recently when it began to look as though the city might comply peacefully with a federal-court order that schools start desegregating this fall, and when the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce made a surprise statement

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implied by his presence in Mississippi, he gives the impression of being a remarkably realistic man—but even his patience has limits. Upon being asked what he would do if a favorable ruling on *U.S. v. Mississippi* did not serve to stop the subterfuge and intimidation, he said, "We'd set up our own election, call in observers, and ask that we be recognized as the true government of Mississippi."

Other members of COFO are still less patient, and many people who are basically sympathetic to the Summer Project believe that some of those involved in it welcome the antagonism of Mississippi whites as the best way to get large-scale federal intervention—or occupation. "I think some of them would do just about anything to get massive federal intervention," one such observer said not long ago. "That's what they want, consciously or unconsciously. They have some fancy words for it—showing the nation the evil, bringing the hostility to the surface—and they won't go outside the bounds of the voting drive to achieve it, but basically it amounts to provoking Mississippi into doing something that the federal government won't take. Why? Maybe they're just tired. Maybe they just want to bring everything to a head after all this. Sometimes I can't blame them."

WHATEVER the reason, the emphasis on violence and arrests is so great at the COFO office in Jackson that a stranger could spend hours there without being aware that a voter-registration drive was being carried on throughout Mississippi, that nearly fifty Freedom Schools are operating in the state, or that a new political party is being organized. About the time of King's visit, voter-registration workers began to concentrate on the mock registration for the Freedom Democratic Party, so that its delegates could demonstrate to the Democratic Convention how many people they represented, but a chart on the rear wall of the office that was supposed to show the registration results by counties was never used, and until a small notice went up on the bulletin board a few days after King left the state there was no indication at all of how the campaign was faring. The Party was being organized from the precinct level up, and several COFO workers who attended a county meeting near Canton, north of Jackson, the day after King left returned bubbling with enthusiasm. But the next day the blackboard on the



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front wall of the COFO headquarters said nothing of the fact that three hundred Negroes had attended a meeting of the Freedom Democratic Party, instead offering the usual reports of violence: "Batesville 1:00 A.M. Freedom House had tear gas grenade thrown into it... Occupants vacated house. McComb 1:30 A.M. House of N.A.A.C.P. prex had two packages of dynamite thrown at it... No injuries... Damage slight. Tchula 3:00 A.M. S.N.C.C. automobile set afire. $\frac{2}{3}$ burned... Interior gutted."

Both the internal and the external communications handled by the Jackson office are dominated by incidents. Most of the material that is provided for visiting reporters—or residents who stroll by the office, for that matter—concerns violence or security. The Jackson office has two WATS (Wide Area Telephone Service) lines operating at a flat rate for unlimited calls anywhere in Mississippi, so that workers can constantly be kept track of by phone; the S.N.C.C. office in Greenwood has a WATS line for Mississippi and one on which calls can be made throughout the country; and the S.N.C.C. office in Atlanta has one for the Eastern United States. Checking goes on incessantly—by means of sign-out sheets, perpetual telephoning, and, lately, even short-wave radio—and any indication of trouble is immediately reported to the North. On the first day of my visit, two Northern lawyers who were travelling from Jackson to Natchez to try to make contact with some Natchez lawyers neglected to phone the COFO office to report their safe arrival. According to those in charge of their project, by the time the two were tracked down, a few hours later, the Attorney General of the United States was about to call the President out of a meeting to inform him of their disappearance.

One reason for emphasizing violence to the press, apparently, is that, in the unceasing effort to draw the nation's attention to Mississippi, violence has proved to be about all that the nation responds to. Another reason is that one of Moses' immediate goals is merely to enable integration groups to exist in some parts of Mississippi in relative safety. S.N.C.C. leaders are not always specific about their goals—beyond, of course, "shaking up" the state and drawing the nation's attention to it—and the goals often appear to be idealistic and practical at the same time. In one sentence, a S.N.C.C. worker may be speculating on what

long-range psychological effect organization for voter registration will have on the Negro community, and in the next sentence he may be speculating on what effect a large Negro vote in Mississippi might have in the 1967 gubernatorial election if a breakthrough should come by then. Some of the S.N.C.C. people call the "One Man, One Vote" campaign a means of assuring a large enough Negro vote to soften the racial policies of the state's politicians, and then say that if the principle is established that even an ignorant man has a right to decide who rules him, the next step has to be the acceptance of some responsibility for seeing to it that he is not ignorant. Defeating a Mississippi senator may be spoken of as a way to help end the congressional bottleneck that is holding up progressive welfare legislation, as well as a way to get better representation for Mississippi Negroes. "Different people have different goals," I was told by a white S.N.C.C. staff worker who has been in Mississippi for several months. "Some are practical: to get one sheriff to stop hitting us over the head, say. Some are subjective—like the satisfaction of seeing a Mississippi Negro woman like Fannie Lou Hamer emerge as a leader, or that meeting in Canton yesterday. I think if we did nothing else, the summer would be worth it for that one meeting. Or seeing the people come to sing after the bombing of the Freedom House in McComb, or five hundred people go to the courthouse to register in Hattiesburg, or seeing people realize that they don't have to dress up to come to a meeting. Some are specific: to get the vote and get some base of power, to get people to talk to their congressmen and get people involved,

to show the social problem that Mississippi is."

S.N.C.C. leaders believe that they can see some progress in Mississippi when it is compared with the monolith of segregation Moses found in 1961. "All other civil-rights groups considered Mississippi hopeless," Forman says. "Now at least a beachhead has been established. We've got organizations all over the state. We've been forming a basis all the time for the Justice Department's voting suits. We've changed the atmosphere in the Negro community. And we're getting more resources, more people, and a consensus that something is wrong. By plugging away, you get the National Council of Churches involved, you get people building community centers, you get things like the Harvard summer teaching project at Tougaloo College, you get white Northern lawyers talking to some of these people for the first time."

The success of COFO depends partly on how consistently its projects are carried on after the summer is over—some of the volunteers are expected to stay on, and Moses, who sees his commitment in terms of "three-year hitch-hikes," plans to remain in Mississippi until 1967—but even if the projects thrive, and even if some breakthroughs in litigation are made, it is likely to be a long time before a COFO worker can see that his efforts have had any substantial effect on the state. "I think that concern over civil rights moves by plateaus, and we had to make sure Mississippi got in on this move," Moses says. "But this commitment has to be for the long haul. People say 'Why are you doing this?' or 'Why are you starting with this aspect?' or 'Where can this approach ever get you?' And we say 'What else would you have us do?'" —CALVIN TRILLIN

THE ALL-AROUND ORBITER

A Project Gemini astronaut may become early next year the first human to be exposed to the hazards of outer space with no protection except his space suit. . . . Air Force Capt. James A. McDivitt, named to be the spacecraft commander, said the experiment will be one of the highlights of the four-day mission. His copilot, Air Force Capt. Edward H. White 2nd, agreed. "This means the start of extra-vehicular activities," White said.—A.P. dispatch.

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Happy Ending

Remember the end of the wonderful Chaplin film "The Gold Rush"?

"They decided to be millionaires, and they were. They decided to live happily ever after, and they did."

Would that it were that easy! Life really *should* be more like the movies.

Unfortunately, happy endings aren't that easy to achieve in real life. But there is something you can do about improving your lot. You can invest.

Now investing isn't a guaranteed solution to all your financial problems any more than the Gold Rush was a bonanza for all the fortune-seekers of '49. But thousands of Americans have found that their extra dollars invested in carefully selected common stocks can work effectively for them—help them build a nest egg for the future.

If you'd like help in selecting stocks for your purposes, just ask. That can be a good beginning to a happy ending.



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