

STUDENT NON-VIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE -- Sunflower-Bolivar
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RULEVILLE PROJECT MEETS ATAC

Ruleville, Mississippi, July 1. 12 Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) summer volunteers participated in a 2 hour dialogue with five members of the Association of Tenth Amendment Conservatives (ATAC), an organization of Mississippi white students. The dialogue took place in the yard of Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, Negro civil rights leader of Ruleville, and at the SNCC sponsored Ruleville Community Center; SNCC volunteers agreed that the conversation was cordial but that little was accomplished by it.

The ATAC group was led by Jack Bishop, son of an Indianola plantation owner and founder of the group. The five asked SNCC workers to join them for a cup of coffee. The SNCC workers agreed, providing any volunteers could come regardless of race. The ATAC group refused to invite the Negro summer volunteers and the SNCC workers then declined the invitation. Instead of drinking coffee last night, the two groups went to the Ruleville Community Center where the ATAC students were shown the recreational center and the 3,000 books that are being provided for the Ruleville community by SNCC. (The Ruleville public library, swimming pool, and baseball diamond are for whites only; there are no comparable public facilities of any kind for the Negroes.)

Fred Miller, 20, of Mobile, Alabama, one of the Negro SNCC volunteers, commented: "They came to convince us we were wrong. They didn't seem to be interested in solving any problems. They didn't want to talk to me. They used 'Nigra,' which I found offensive; none used the word 'Negro.' They weren't concerned with the Negro masses, just with exceptional Negroes."

Dave Gerber, 21, of Chevy Chase, Maryland, a white SNCC volunteer said of them: "They simply couldn't disagree with most of our goals - voter registration, education, community centers. They could only reply that change would take a long time. They were silent when we asked them why they weren't working for those goals. Basically, these guys are conservative - afraid of change - but they thought they were really radical."