

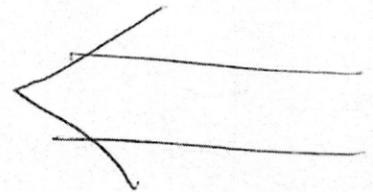
Bob Moses

West Coast Civil Rights Conference

April 23, 1964

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Bob

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TAPE I

When we first went to Miss. we didn't know what we could do and we went there more or less with the attitude to ^{try and} find out what was possible that is to see what could be done We didn't have any resources really and we weren't sure how we should go about or what it was we should do the first real ^{I guess real} sense of ^{what} ~~of~~ we had to ^{do} ~~take~~ care with the ^{some of} ~~first~~ contacts ^{that we had} partic^{ularly} with rural farmers because perhaps for the first time certainly in my life I met some people ^{who} we were seen^{ed} extremely simple in their conception of life ~~and~~ but very direct in terms of what they wanted and t what they needed and in terms of certain elemental ideas about justice and feelings ab-out ~~the~~ people. And if we have any anchor at all I mean if there's any ^{base} ~~faith~~ from which we operate ~~and~~ if there's any reason why we don't ^{redly} ~~go~~ crazy why we don't have more real problems than we do have i f there's any reason why we can skip around from the bottom of Miss to the top of the skyscrapers ⁱⁿ ~~from~~ Manhattan and still maintain some kind of internal sense of balance I think alot of it has to do with those people. and that fact that they have their own sense of balance which is somehow independent of what goes on around the rest of the country becaus e they're not affected by it. Most of them say do't have telephones ^{they} don't have newspapers . They have very little contact with the outside world. They do have radios ~~and~~ they do have televisions so they have some contact but yet in many ways they've managed to maintain something which is fundamental and which gives I think many a worker real strength when ~~he's~~ working down in the rural areas of Miss ~~Now~~ Now part of the problems our country is in is caused by ^{the fact} ~~that~~ that ~~there~~ areno work for these people on the ~~of~~ farms any more so many many many of them are leaving those small farms and going to the small cities ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ the South and then into the large urban areas of the North and certainly when I left New York City to go to Miss I had no idea of what would happen ^{to} ~~in~~ Harlem say I ~~wasn't~~ wasn't teaching in Harmlen. I wasn't qualified to teach in Harlem. I was qualified to teach in a fancy

prep school but the public school system of our country are such that while you might be qualified to teach in ^{the} fancy prep schools of the country you're not qualified to teach in some of the public schools of the country.

So I wasn't really a part of what was going on in Harlem but I certainly didn't-I knew that there was tremendous problems there and that there was not on the horizon ^{any where} ~~anyway~~ an inkling of where the solutions would come from.

or even if anybody was seriously thinking about them and doing something about them. But there was in the South with the kids who were acting in the sitin movement some idea that somebody was doing something about some key problme in the state, in the country. And it was in direct response to ~~the~~ that challenge that the kids, the sitin people, gave that myself and other people began to move down South. Now when we first

got into Miss we were really on our own and very much alone. I just will recount one very short instance I took two people down to Liberty to register about 4 weeks or more after I had been working in that county I met with a group of white people who proceeded to attack us. And they singled myself out and my head was tattoted to several stitches. The JUstice Department's reaction to that was they didn't a have a really

clearcut case because we were walking thru the streets on our way to the courthouse. The news of that never got out around the country and in mney ways that's just as well. And what we really realize and what was brought home to us is that for the time being we were out there fighting by ourselves. There was no help either from the Federal government in any

real sense The FBI agent who came around to do the investigation although we called him that same night showed up 2 weeks later for the first time and then proceeded to try and convince me that I really hadn't been beaten but had fell. and he tried to tried to convince me that I fell 3 ~~different~~ times and that the wounds in 3 different places were from those 3 different falls.

②

And his concern and really the concern that we've had time and time again since then from Southern FBI agents was at that time to try and picture color the story to the tune of the their concern so that the picture that went back to Washington was one that would in any case favor them.

Now we operated that way for about a year in 1961 thru 1962 more or less on our own really a small band of people 4 or 5 people but we did discover several things, that it was possible to pick up in the Negro community, and get them to work ^{young people} It was possible to find in almost every

community in which you worked 1 or 2 people who would be willing to take a stand who would be willing to ^{identity} ~~identity~~ with you who would provide some kind of foothold in that community and allow you a chance to work and organize. It was possible to move around a state and begin to get ^{the} feeling within the state of the dimensions of the problem. Just how immense the problem was just how deep it was rooted just how long a struggle it would be just how limited we were in our resources. Now along about 1962 in the summer we began to get the first bit of help from the outside and ~~they~~ came it

in the form of political help. It was at that time that Pres. Kennedy and the people in the White House decided to push voter registration and to help with the drive with the court cases of the Justice Dept. in terms of much needed funds which were to be used ^{to help} in organizing ~~people~~ ^{for people} voter registration drives. So that there ^{it} began to develop a small fund of money based really out of New York City which was available for people to work ⁱⁿ ~~on~~ voter registration in the South. So whereas up to then we were ^{really} living catch as catch can day by day, In many cases off the community depending on whether we were ~~able~~ able to find friends and people who would house and feed us. From the summer of 1962 on thru the summers of 1963 we began to get a little more support, and it was during that time that we began to develop what became known as the Council of Federated Organizations and really began to see that it was

possible in Miss. to locate in isolated rural communities and in some town groups of people ~~not~~ in touch with each other who would be able to work with each other ~~and~~ might ~~for~~ the basis ^{kind of} ~~for~~ some organization in the state and might form the basis ~~sixxxxx~~ ^{who form} ultimately for some kind of political organization to ~~attaxxxxx~~ tackle Miss's establishment because by that time it was clear that the problems ⁱⁿ of Miss. in terms of were to be focused on political problems and what we had to do was somehow ~~to~~ begin to tackle the political establishment in Miss. that the White Citizens Council, the Governor, the State Legislature, the Judiciary were all part of one monolithic system and that in order to find any kind of gaps in it we were going to have to hit right at its heart.

Well now, that phase in there was marked by several types of incidents and probably for us and for the workers and still for the workers the acts of what we call symbolic terror figure most sharply in ~~the~~ coloring all of the work because first Miss deals in symbolic acts of terror, of killing ~~we believe~~ It was you can roll off the names in 1956 it was Mr. Lee in Belzoni who was shot and killed. The year after in that same city it was Gud Cortes who was shot and run out of the city. 1960 it was a man on Brookhaven's courthouse lawn who was shot and killed ~~the~~ 1961 it was Herbert Lee in ^{Amite} ~~Amite~~ County who was shot and killed

In 1963 it was Medgar Evers in Jackson who was shot and killed 1964 it was Lewis Allen and 3 people in Wilkinson County and just recently another person in Wilkinson County all shot and killed. Always the same type of people were found They'd been shot by white people there and only in Medgar Evers case was an indictment brought

and an actual trial This kind of act of terror forces several ^{very deep} questions for the people ~~working~~ ^{who are} there, because they have to in some sense ~~of~~ ^{on} other come to grips with this. Workers who ~~work~~ ^{are working in} Natchez ~~and~~ McComb ~~xxxxxxx~~ ^{Amite} ~~Amite~~ County who have to ride those roads by themselves who have already been shot at once, who may be every time a Headlight

flashes up behind them when they're riding at night wonder if this is another time when somebody might take another shot at them have to come to grips within themselves in terms of some kind of internal balance about that problem of violence . All of that had to happen in that year ~~say~~ between ^{say} 1961 ~~and~~ 62 and on into 63. But while that was happening what kept people going and what still keeps people going was that you were able to reach and make contact with Negro farmers with the people in the ~~cities~~ ^{cities} You were able to actually grab a hold of them There was some feeling that you had hit some rock bottom that you had some base that you could work with and that you could build on and ~~that~~ as long as you had that maybe there was some hope for making some real changes some day. Now in 1963 after the summer and after the march on Washington the Aaron Henry campaign issued for us in Miss.

a new dimension. It wasn't a dimension devoid of problems there were ~~real~~ ^{real} very tough problems with the numbers of students from Stanford and Yale. sudden appearance of from

But what they meant more than anything else was some type of involvement of the rest of the country on a different scale with a different kind of personal commitment and with a different ~~kind~~ possibility for organizing and working ~~in~~ ^{within} the state. And it's the summer project which is the ~~sequel~~ sequel to that and which is yet now being focused in a different way because the Aaron Henry campaign about it, it was as if we ~~it~~ ^{WELL} it was a big spontaneous thing and all of a sudden people rushed in.

and they were there for a week or two and then they ^{vanished} ~~were~~ were and the feeling ~~that~~ ^{of} alot of the kids ~~that~~ ^{who} came down, ~~then~~ ^{I'm} not sure what ~~some~~ feelings were but they alot of them probably were drawn up in a great burst of excitement on ^{campus} and a very quick decision to move ^{bigout} ~~the~~ down and then down into something which maybe they hadn't really anticipated and couldn't have anticipated. This time what's at stake is something deeper. It's a question of whether in this country we can find people who are committed who know who care who are willing to sacrifice who are

willing to ~~say~~ say that they want to do their share, who are willing and able ~~to~~ perhaps to look on this as somehow the country's business not just as the Negro's problem who are willing to look on this not as something maybe that just has to be done in Miss. but something that will be carried back and will have to be done in places all ~~the~~ across this country if we're ~~not~~ really going to get at the bottom of some of these problems. Now while this development was going on in Miss. there's been a parallel development across the country. because whereas ~~say~~ when we first [✓] returned to New York city after being down working in Miss. for ~~4~~ ^{say} four or five or six months it was hard to tell anybody what you were doing. they really didn't know and they couldn't understand what was going on. But after a year and then finally after Birmingham the country was alive There was some movement in the country, there was some focus on the problem The problem had all of a sudden become ^a ~~the~~ national problem. Now ~~if it's~~ it's the emergence of the civil rights problem as a national problem which is causing alot of concern and alot of anxiety and rightly so in different places up North, The question that we think faces the country ~~is~~ questions which ^{are} ~~are~~ in one sense [✓] deeper than civil rights They're questions which go ^{are much} very much to the bottom of mankind and of people They're questions which have repercussions in terms of our whole international affairs and ~~relations~~ They're questions which go to the very root of our society. What kind of society will we be What kind of a ~~people~~ will we be It just happens that the civil rights question is at the spearhead of all of these. All the questions ~~of~~ ^{about} automation all the questions about our schools, all the questions about our cities. What kind of cities will we have. All of these finally focus in the public eye in terms of some kind of civil rights demonstraton or another at a construction site, a school boycott, a ~~semit~~ ^{semit} strike, a stalkin. They're all gaining national focus and beginning to bring to the attention of the American people

a ~~broader~~ ^{broader} cross section of problems. The problem is whether we will be able

to really find solutions whether we will be able if we find these solutions to take the steps ~~which~~ ^{that} might be necessary in terms of the structure of our politics and economics to carry them through. Whether if we're willing to take those steps, whether those steps can be carried through peacefully and with some kind of minimum amount of real frustration for million of people . There's an article in the Atlantic Monthly, this month it pinpoints 9 people who control Congress. Senator Russell, Senator, Eastland, Representative Vinson, Representative Mills, and I think there are 3 other senators and two other congressmen. To a man they come from the South they point out for one thing for instance, that Calif. does not have any Senator who is the head of any major committee in the Senate. And they don't have it because they have the two-party system because they send Republicans this time and maybe they change over and send Democrats next time But on the other hand ^{where you} the South ~~we~~ still have ^a ~~the~~ one party system by and large and you send the same people back every time. These people gain control. Now the situation in this country now is that the people who have control in Congress and are really at loggerheads with the rest of the country in terms of blocking legislation which is vitally needed can't be reached in terms of their political base. I mean we've tried, I mean we've tried voter registration ⁱⁿ ~~and~~ Eastland 's state There're voter registration drives going on in Arkansas, ^{and} Georgia, ^{and} Alabama and Virginia with Senator Bird. But these people have a political base which is ~~secure~~ ^{sp?} for the moment secure and which we can't reach. The feeling that we have is that the vital changes ~~that~~ which are needed ~~can't~~ cannot be gotten unless there is some political changes. That just as in Miss. you have to have political changes to get any real changes in that state In this country we're going to have ^{to have} ~~any~~ political changes to get any real changes across the board. The question is whether the American people are willing to listen to that willing to try and understand what it means and willing to try and do what they have to do

in order to change it, because if they don't then we are in serious trouble, and we will be in serious trouble. The trouble will primarily be focused around civil rights perhaps the blame will perhaps go to dissident and extremist elements within the civil rights movement who take to arms, who blow up bridges, who arm themselves, who create acts of terror, just like the acts of terror which are going on in Miss. which nobody knows about and which people all over the country don't, can't know about because the news media won't tell them but when the Negroes take to acts of terror they will know about it and the country will know about it but the

pre conditions for those things already exist. They exist within the cities. They will erupt within the cities. There's no question about it They will erupt unless some mechanism is found in this country to deal with those problems. There just isn't such a mechanism. When Kennedy tried to get an urban affairs bill through the House, through the Senate, he couldn't do it. The people who were stopping him were exactly those same people that the Atlantic article ^{WAMES} ~~names~~ They are Republicans connected with Dixicrats. Those people have been blocking effective legislation in the Congress which would be able to deal with some of the serious problems we have in our cities. and it's not until the country begins to come to grips with it that you're going to get begin to get any kind of solution? 70% of the Negro youth in Philad. are unemployed, do not have jobs, may not get jobs because there' aren't jobs for them. It's a fantastic figure. It affects white people when they organize gangs and start hitting and shooting and fighting each other and ^{maybe} then turn their violence into the streets and attack property which probably belongs to white people. And then the reaction of the white people ^{or} of the country is to say to turn on them, to ask reasons why is it that Negroes do such and such. To call upon Negro leaders for control, for moderation to find some solution about juvenile delinquency.

But the fact remains that the economy of this country does not produce jobs for these people, that we don't have jobs for them and that until they get jobs, there's going to be trouble. And the trouble is there because the pattern for demonstration has already been established. And it's been established around the right to eat at a lunch counter and it will most certainly, inevitably pick up and be followed around the right for jobs and other more basic things. The stall-ins in New York, I think, are, have been completely misunderstood all over the country and I've been thinking more and more about those. The whole idea of New York City spending millions of dollars, the city spent [✓] million ~~of~~ dollars, thirty

Ford spent millions of dollars, U.S. Steel spent millionsof dollars, all the private industries spending millions of dollars to build a fair to show poeple how they will live in the year 2000 with beautiful glass buildings and moving sidewalks. ^{When} people in that city are having rent

~~strikes~~ because there're rats running up and down their walls, it's strikes fantastic when you really think ^{of} ~~about~~ it. I mean the deep irony ^{of} ~~about~~ that hasn't treached ^{out} across the country all everyone was concerned with was

don't mess up our World's Fair. Who's World's Fair? What the people, the connection between the real significance of that stall-in ^{and} what the people were trying to do, I don't think ever got across to the country.

because the principle around which you desegregated the lunch ~~counters~~ ^{counters} was you went in sat in at those lunch counters and you said to the

whole town, "Either you serve me or nobody gets served." Well that was the effective principle behind sit-ins at lunch counters. Either you

serve me or nobody gets served. It was effective at lunch counters because ^{you know} what they were asking for and what they were doing were right there like that.

Well in effect, the people who were leading the stall-ins were saying ^{to} New York City, "Either you pay attention to our very ~~real~~ real, crying problems or we, ~~or~~ nobody, nobody can

function in the city. We're going to tie you up."

And they had already tried to address the problems individually You had rent strikes ^{Right} ~~like~~ now they're in the process of deciding whether the

blocks where Jesse Gray was organizing rent strikes should be an area for urban renewal. Now that's one way to get rid of Jesse Gray, I guess.

Just clean him out. and put some new public housing in its place

We've had school boycotts. They tried to get at the problems of schools thru focusing on the schools and drawing the kids out. It raised an

awful rucus. It split the civil rights leadership and sent

New York City into a tipsy and rightly so because there are no solutions to that independently of other solutions. Youve had problems

? in attacking about housing but all those things are so inextricably tied together that it's impossible to find solutions to them separately.

It's impossible to find solutions to the problems of the schools without finding solutions to ~~the~~ problems of jobs and housing. But who's available

to deal with ~~it~~ ^{them}? Nobody, there isn't any agency in our city, in our state in our federal government there isn't any agency available to deal with

those three problems conceived as a unit, Housing and jobs and schools and to try and get an overall plan to attack them. There will probably

be more stall-ins. There will be more attemp[s] probably at ~~tying~~ ^{tying} up cities and there will have to be those until there comes in the country some sense

of what's ~~really~~ happening and coming to grips with those problems ^{really}

Now the South poses a different problem I think for the country

because but the problems that, they're certainly so intertwined

~~that~~ . In the Delta area of Miss. the people who work the plantations are facing ~~the~~ ^{the} fact that every year there are 10% fewer jobs for them.

that in probably 5 years the plantation~~s~~, the automotation of the plantation~~s~~ will be completed. The labor market on the plantation will be ^{very well} stabilized

at a very low point And the people who come off those plantations will be unemployed and unemployable in our society. They will be permanently

unemployed because first they don't have the skills, and there isn't anywhere in our whole country a system for teaching them, ^{how} to read and write because there, that was nobody's problem who had power, ^{way} who had money, who had resources who could tackle that problem.

It's only since we've been down in Miss. and since the civil rights movement has begun in the last few years, that ~~we~~ ^{you've} begun to get some

concerted effort ~~that~~ with very minimum resources. We got a grant an anonymous grant, mind you, of \$80,000 to tackle the problem of literacy

at a fundamental bedrock level. And the person who gave it had to give it anonymously because the problem of literacy in the Delta, ^{and} in Miss.

and the Deep South is a political problem. Because if you teach people how to read and write then they're going to begin to want to govern themselves and they're going to begin to want to govern themselves in an area where

they ~~think~~ form the predominance of the population over ~~a~~ more articulate, economically controlling white group. And that's a political problem in our

country. The Congressmen, the senators from those districts aren't interested in sponsoring literacy problems so there are no bills in Congress. We don't have a bill that has ever been introduced in Congress

to deal with the problem of literacy for Negroes in the South. They're not interested. But where're those people goin' to go. The people when they leave the Delta are goin' to go to the cities in the North.

They're going to go to Chicago, they're going to go to St. Louis, Detroit, They're going to come to Calif. and Los Angeles and San Francisco. They're here already. And these are the basis for many of the problems of the cities

around the country. But there's no overall, ~~there's~~ overall, there's no body who's, ^{who's} no government agency, no private agency ~~is~~ able to look at that problem and have some kind of authority or business to deal with it.

Now our feeling is that we have to be able to attack some of the specific structures which ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ are visible, which we can see which we may be able to move at.

Certainly the people who are in Congress from the South, who don't belong there are such structures and part of that structure, and they need to be removed from office. And certainly the whole country will be better off and better equipped to deal with these problems if they are. This does not beg the question of whether there will be Republicans or Democrats or what will happen in terms of the political structure ~~which~~ ^{that} will evolve.

Nobody knows. And it should not, the question should not be raised in terms of people who are afraid of what the political structure will be like if we get rid of those Dixiecrats. The problem is to get rid of them and ^{begin to} work on whatever evolves.

(1)
TAP E

For our part this summer we're going to go to the National Democratic Convention in Atlantic City and challenge the regular Miss. delegation. We're going to ask the National Democratic Party that they unseat that delegation that they seat our people in its place and they they make a real structural change or the beginning of a structural change within their party. Our basⁱs for doing that are 3 or four-fold, ^{we've} ~~the~~ carrying on within the state of what we call the freedom registration. Some of the people who come down this summer who are interested in politics will be working on that. We're setting up our own registrars in every one of the 82 counties. ^{They have} ~~There are~~ deputy registrars. We have ^{our} ~~our~~ own forms. We're challenging the ^{whole} basis of the registration in Miss.

We don't have ^{any forms,} any questions which make people interpret some section of the Constitution. And we're making it simply, as simple as we possibly can. We want to register upwards of 300,000 or 400,000 Negroes around the state of Miss. To dispel at least ^{for} once and for all ^{if} that the reason Negroes don't register is because they're apathetic. Because there are these 400,000 people to be registered. But for one thing people don't even know that they're there. And if they are ^{if} they do know, they say ^{well} if so many people are not registered part of the reason and probably a large part of the reason must be their apathy. With the freedom registration we also have ~~the~~ freedom candidates. We have 3 people who are running for Congress, one from the 2nd Congressional District, one from the 3rd ^{and} ~~and~~ one from the 5th and then a person who is running against Senator Stennis. They have all filed ^{met} ~~they have~~ all the qualifications and their names should on the Democratic Primary June 2nd. The idea is to begin to develop ~~again~~ again within the people, the Negro people and some white people ~~and~~ in the state a different conception of their politics, and to ~~begin~~ begin to see if we can ^{evolve} evolve a political organization within Miss.

We also are going to attend the precinct meetings that the regular Democratic delegates will be holding around the state. We figure that many of our people will be thrown out of these meetings because they're segregated. And we're going to use this as part of the documentation as to why that delegation should not be seated. We also are goin' to elect our own delegates paralleling their procedures right from the start precinct meetings county ~~meetings~~ conventions, ^{the} district caucuses, ~~the~~ state convention a total of 68 delegates representing 24 votes @ 2 whole votes and 22 half votes. We're going to send them to Atlantic City we're going to ask that they be seated. We're going to demand that they be seated. There ~~most~~ ^{will} certainly ~~will~~ be demonstrations at Atlantic City. It seems inconceivable that the groups in New York City and Boston and Philadelphia which have been ^{growing} ~~going~~ out on rent strikes ^{and the} school boycotts will not focus on the Democratic Party to get some kind of ~~just~~ justice about their grievances out of that party. Now for many of us this will be a real turning point in terms of whether it will be possible to get anything out of the political structure ^s that is meaningful in this country.

I mean we're trying to work as closely and as assiduously ~~xx~~ and as hard as we can within the political structures of this country. Trying to see if they will bend, if they have any flexibility, if they give at some point, if they can really accomodate themselves to the demands of the people. The problem up to this point is that they haven't ^{bent} ~~bent~~. They ~~haven't~~ haven't given. They haven't been able to come up with real solutions.

Everything has been patchwork and every time you put a patch on here pressure mounts ~~xxxx~~ here and something explodes and you put a patch on it there and ~~xxxxxx~~ and the pressure mounts here and something else explodes. Now the questions that people keep asking are, "How long can this go on How long ^{are} ~~the~~ Negroes goin' to maintain nonviolence, how long ~~are~~ ^{are} they ~~are~~ goin' to work in this fashion and the answer is I don't know I really don't know. The problem now is that the call has really gone out

(W)

to the rest of the country, not to Negroes now and the challenge now is to the rest of the country. In the same way really, that the challenge in the South is to white people in the South. There's a sitin^{at} ~~and~~ a lunch counter downtown. The question is, "How will the white people respond." See What will they focus on. Will they focus on ~~that~~ fact that the Negro shouldn't be down there and some of them are unruly and some of them ~~approach~~ ^{approach} violence and some of them do this and some of them do that or will they in turn focus on their just grievances and say o.k. this is what ~~we~~ gotta do we've got to move over here ^{we've} and begin to accomodate them. That kind of call has gone out across the country now.

And already the initial response is fearful because the initial response is not ~~of~~ ^{one} in terms of reexamination of the country and its structures and how they can be changed, how they have to move and accommodate but focusing on the bad elements and using that as an excuse.

And it seems to me if you evaluate what's going on in San Francisco with regard to the initiative as I understand it within these last few days it's the fact that people, the first thing that most people want to focus on is not the initiative. But they want to focus on the demonstrations and say see that's the reason why we've got to have the initiative. Well that's the same kind of thing ^{which} ~~that~~ the Southerners did when the sitin^s first started. It's ~~exactly~~ the same thing they did. They focused on the demonstrators and said, "Look at that" People trying to take over our cities. That's the reason we've got to strengthen our laws, add to the police force, protect our citizens and our homes. I mean that's exactly what their reaction was. The question will be Theodore White wrote an article in Life Magazine shortly after Kennedy was assassinated And he was describing the civil rights groups and picking out different facets of them and the one thing that he focused on was some of the

civil rights groups and he singled out ~~skxxx~~ in particular
SNCC

who were goin' to challenge the Democrats at their convention and were goin' to say to them, "If we can't sit at the table with you, then we'll just chop off the legs and everybody sits on the floor. " And he was saying that, you know, this is dangerous because he's essentially a man who looks for solutions who tries to find ways out of impasses who looks for a mean between the extremes. But the problem is what are the real solutions. And the danger is ^{the} the areas and ^{the} avenues which might be real solutions will ^{that} simply be branded as acts of extremism. In exactly the same sense ~~that~~ ^{in which} the first acts of the sitins geared to small Southern towns were branded that way by Southern politicians.

Well, I'd like to say ~~a~~ just a little about the summer project, more concretely. and I'd like to do it in terms of some of the history as it evolved and some of the problems which happened in the state as it, the conception of the summer project came about. The staff in Miss. ^{were} ~~was~~ violently opposed to the summer project when it was first announced. They were opposed to an invasion of white people, coming in to do good and to work for ^a ~~the~~ summer and essentially ^{to} ~~run~~ ^{run} projects, They thought, without having any experience and basis for doing that. And we spent half of Nov. and all of Dec. and Jan. and on into the very ~~beginning~~ ^{beginning} of March and very heated, tough discussions about what the summer project could be, what it couldn't be what kind of hopes it held out for people in Miss. and the country and what it didn't ^{what} were its limits. What were the things that might really happen in terms of it that would be significant. And it was out of those discussions that we reached a very uneasy, in many cases, but at least tentative agreement ~~from~~ among a majority of the staff to go ahead with concrete specific programs and to try and channel people who were coming down into very specific jobs and tasks. And it was out of that agreement that ~~an~~ idea and conception of freedom schools and doing something to try ^a ^{the} ^{the}

break psychological

and break hold of ~~the~~ psychological hold that Negroes have, evolved and the concept of working in the community centers, and the concept of working in ~~a~~ white community, the concept of trying to provide some cultural dimension to the program, and the concept of trying to buttress and further the ~~work of the legal group~~ legal work group. Now on the other hand the people in Miss did not have the reaction of the staff at all. The farmers, and the people who live and work there welcomed the whole idea because they feel that anybody who comes down to help is good. that they need help, that they need all they help they can get, that they're isolated, that they're alone, that they have no real tools, that they face an overwhelming enemy, and any kind of help that they can get is welcome. So that it was with the assurance ~~in~~ any case that again and returning ~~and~~ this was

more than anything else I think that swayed alot of us. because again in the end I think in many cases the instinct of the people and particularly some of the rural farmers about these things are truer, deeper, less cluttered, less bothered by personal problems and things like that than the instincts of say the staff and the people who are working. So it was with this kind of background that we went in to the project. And more and more as we've gotten into, it we've come to a consideration that ~~the~~ the people who come down should be under some very well-established controls that they should have some idea of some very significant things they can do but very limited and perhaps significant because they are limited. and that some of the things that we will try to do would not be some of the things that we first envisaged ~~xxxx~~ doing.

So for instance in the freedom schools we have one tract which is basically just a set of questions which is devised to draw out of the Negro youngsters some ideas about themselves and the lives they lead. Questions which might ask them is their house painted, does it have indoor

toilets. Do they have pictures on their walls? How many kids live ~~in~~ in a room. What are their schools like. Do they have libraries, what kind of teaching facilities do they have do they have lavatories. Questions ~~xxxx~~ which take them across town into white peoples homes.

and try to ^{maybe} get them to imagine what the homes are like over there.

What the schools are ~~like~~, questions which take them inside into their own minds which try ~~xxxx~~ and get at attitudes that they have about themselves, that they have about white people. R Questions ~~xxxx~~ which

can be handled by people who have some sensitivity to other people who have some concern about them, who are not so interested in projecting themselves but able to try ^{and} reach out and really cross what is a really

very wide gap between white people from middle-class backgrounds in the North and Negro youngsters who've grown up in ~~the~~ slums, rural or urban,

in the South. So that one of [✓] things we ~~ought~~ to do ~~is~~ was maybe to ^{the} ^{hoped} working across the summer, if we touched in 20 Freedom Schools a thousand

kids and began to draw some things like that out of them ~~and~~ then

we felt that ^{maybe} we would have another layer, another stage, another base that we would have to operate from ~~London~~ ^{London} on the question of voting

we decided that we would like to try and establish across the summer the right to picket at the courthouses in the downtown urban areas,

We had a picket line at Hattiesburg ? which started Jan. 22nd ^{when} ~~and~~ some 50 ministers from the National Council of Churches came in and joined

alot of our staff and young people, and which went everyday from 9 ~~to~~ 5 ^{till} and on Saturdays ^{from} 9 ~~to~~ 12 all through the month of March and on into the ^{till} month of April .

There were many significant things that came out of that picket line. For one thing, there was no violent white reaction.

even though 50 miles away the Ku Klux Klan was burning crosses at 15 farmhouses and shooting 5 Negroes. In Hatties burg no one was bothering the picket line. And even though the police the first day

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marched out in a platoon of 25 and stood up and down the streets and
~~xxxx~~ barracaded them by the end of the week they were down to ~~two~~
1 or 2 policemen in shifts serving as observers. And the fact was that
the white people of Hattiesburg were not that upset about a picket line
at their courthouse Their attitudes about the ^{rights of} Negroes ~~right~~ to vote
did not reach that far so that they were willing to ~~form~~ ^{form} mobs in the streets
and conduct some kind of violence. So that the whole focus of the
people who were really stopping voter registration could be narrow ~~was~~ WAS
something that many ~~of~~ people thought already but that this corroborated it
that the political establishment in Miss. ^{are} the people who ~~were~~ ^{are} really
I mean holding on and not letting Negroes vote ^{are} That if the white people were
able or freer, had more elbow room were able to move, had more dimensions
themselves to move in then it might be possible for Negroes to vote.
We want to do this if we can in city after city around the state.
Now we've already met obstacles to that the state legislature, about a week
and a half ago passed a bill making it illegal to picket any public building
The Governor signed it into law and the next day they arrested the whole
picket line in Hattiesburg. And 44 people are not out on \$1,000 property
bonds each from Hattiesbrug, but they're determined to start the picket line
up again and we're determined to gain that right this summer. Now in many
cases and in many ways it's a very limited right but it's crucial in Miss.
because if we gain the right to picket in integrated picket line
then labor unions will gain the right to picket in integrated picket line
in Miss. and ~~will~~ gain the right to picket. ^{and} and possibly the trade unions
and UAW and the Teamsters and the labor unions will move into Miss. ^{we'll} and will
begin to organize the working people. And if they move in then there just
might begin to move in behind them a whole host of other organizations
in terms of beginning to meet and get to working people in Miss.

And ~~that~~^{that} would be a bridgehead for the whole Deep South. if that were established. If it's possible to have interracial teams living and working in Miss. ^{in the Negro communities} It might change the whole conception around the country of how it might be possible to get at some of these problems in the Deep South.

The Federal government cannot have a real domestic peace corps. It's possible for our country to organize youth all over the country, to give them elaborate training, to spend millions and millions of dollars very worthwhile, to train them and send them abroad to work in underdeveloped countries all across the world. It would be impossible for them to mount any where near that kind of program in this country.

They couldn't send segregated teams into the South, the country wouldn't ~~not~~ have it. They couldn't send integrated teams into the South, they couldn't guarantee their protection. They couldn't guarantee their protection. The Federal government of this country can send people to Africa and get guarantees from the states that they go to in Africa that they will have protection and that their lives will be save. They couldn't ~~get~~ it from Alabama. and they couldn't get it from Mississippi. they couldn't get it from Louisiana. They couldn't mount a domestic peace corps in this country.

The country doesn't have available ^{yet} the tools ~~anyway~~ to really get at this problem. It just doesn't have them. We don't even know how to put money intelligently into a state like Miss. The Ford Foundation I bet wouldn't know how to put 10 million dollars into Miss. with out buttressing the system that already exists.

I mean how would they do it. How would you put money into the educational system of Miss. without reinforcing what already exists there. We don't even have the beginnings of ~~a~~ solution. One thing that might happen out of this summer which ~~might~~^{could} be very significant would be some idea of how people could go about beginning to make some break in the situation down there in the Deep South. Professor Wasse^rstrom ~~who~~ who spoke

this morning or this afternoon He was really, he was talking not about the whole South He was talking about the Black Belt South I mean the towns that he was describing ^{are} ~~were~~ the towns ^{which} ~~that~~ lie in that arch which ~~stands~~ extends all the way down from the Eastern seaboard ^{of} ~~to~~ Maryland moves all the way down through southside Virginia into ~~the~~ South Carolinas and part of North Carolina. sweeps through southwest Georgia into middle Alabama, spills all over Miss. and then goes into northern Louisiana and southeastern Arkansas. And the town that he was describing is found through all those areas. which are the Black Belt of this country, country known because of the deep, rich, black soil and the black people who form the predominance of the population in all those areas. And we don't know what to do with that section of the country. It's a tiger. The Federal Government is afraid we have it by the tail. They don't know what to do with it because it raises the question of Negroes getting the vote and having political control. You watch how carefully, ^{just} how carefully, they're treating Tuskegee where Professor Wassefstrom is at, ~~making~~ Macon County in Alabama. Where not only the Negroes have the majority of the population, they are in every way in terms of the standards we use around the country to judge people superior to the white population, because of the institutions there, because of the VA institution and the school and everything and yet we've been pussyfooting for years, trying very carefully to give them the vote stage by stage so that there isn't the sudden emergence of a Negro county where the Negroes ~~get~~ political power. Now if that's the situation in a county like that ^{grab} Bullet, Macon county whatever it is, where the Negroes have the majority and also have the education and are in every way qualified to run that county and that town then you can imagine where how it is in the counties where they don't have the education, where they've been deprived of the education, where they in many cases can't read and write.

The question comes up all the time about nonviolence and what it means
 And there're really [?] more problems which are connected already with
 the summer project. I realize ^{one} type of problem two and a half years ago
 when ~~we~~ we first went down to Amite County. Because Herbert Lee who was
 killed ^{that} ~~last~~ summer just as surely because we went in there to organize
 as rain comes because the clouds, was killed If we hadn't of gone in there he
 wouldn't have been killed. The action which was started in that county
 wouldn't have happened, the chain of events leading up to ~~his~~ his death
 wouldn't have happend. So in some sense if you're concerned about people
 and concerned about these [?] questions, you have to dig into yourself to
 find out in what sense kind of you share responsibility What does it mean to
 be involved in that kind of action which might precipitate that kind of death.
 And I'm just posing that question now. I mean, Camus poses it on a historical
 scale ^{whether} ~~whether~~ people ~~shall~~ be victims or executioners
in terms of shall

Whether those people who are enslaved, in order to get their freedom,
 have to become executioners and participate in acts of terror and death,
 and in what sense they do participate in it. And it takes place on maybe
 a very small scale down South in terms of that kind of activity which we
 carry on. and perhaps one justification is that you are no less exposed than
 they are. so that at least you share that kind of exposure with them.
 But then that's not equally so. The people who are apparently working
 in ~~Amite and Wilk~~ ^{Amite} ~~in Amite and Wilk~~ ^{Wilkenson} and Pike counties are more
 exposed than anybody. The people who've been working in Jackson, organizing
 the office, which had to be done, are not as exposed as they are.
 And certainly the people who go down to Miss this summer I mean
 that the whole question of what will happen rests very heavy
 because nobody really knows what might happen. And we're back in that ~~xxxx~~
 same kind of dilemma which can be put maybe very nicely in terms of victims
 and executioners, philosophically, but ^{when}
and

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you come to deal with it personally, it still rests very heavy.