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The chemistry of forces that has created the Freedom movement in Mississippi has also produced some unprecedented projects not normally associated with civil rights activity. Foremost of these projects is the Free Southern Theatre, a permanent professional repertory company that will tour Mississippi, playing also in Memphis and New Orleans, performing in theaters, churches, in the fields and in the streets. The administrative headquarters of the theater will be in New Orleans.

As well as touring with its own productions, the Free Southern Theater plans a unique program of community involvement with theater through a program of workshops and community productions. The workshops will serve not only to educate the audience of the theater but will serve also to strengthen the relationship of the Free Southern Theater to its audience, and will stimulate the growth of indigenous community theater.

The Free Southern Theater is as much a product of "the movement" as voter registration, community centers, or the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. It is the conception of two young staff members of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, men who had made a commitment to the theater before they came South to work in the movement and met each other. John O'Neal is a graduate of Southern Illinois University; Gil Moses, 22 years old, is from Cleveland by way of off-Broadway theater in New York. O'Neal and Moses met in Mississippi, where the Free Southern Theater was born. Now associated with them as the third producing director of the Theater is Richard Schechner, editor of the Tulane Drama Review.

The Free Southern Theater is committed to the promotion of "the growth and self-knowledge of a new Southern audience of Negroes and whites", and to the addition of a cultural and educational dimension to the Southern freedom movement. For those people associated with it, the Theater intends to provide a forum in which the Negro playwright can deal honestly with his own experience, express himself in what may prove to be "a new idiom, a new genre, a theatrical form as unique as blues, jazz, or gospel."

In its first summer of operation, the Theater has been touring the state with its production of "In White America", the prize-winning drama that opened in New York last winter. The company has given this production for church congregations, civil rights workers, school children, and has played under almost every conceivable sort of conditions. The directors plan for their next tour, to begin in Mid-November, a repertory, including plays of authors such as Ossie Davis, Berthold Brecht, James Baldwin, and new playwrights like Douglas Turner and Ann K. Flagg. On the production tour they expect to spend a week to ten days in each

Mississippi community they visit. The workshop program will have members of the company stationed in communities for longer periods to work more closely with the interested local people.

The summer production, "In White America", played in many Mississippi communities, including McComb, Hattiesburg, Gulfport, Biloxi, Meridian, Canton, Jackson, Tougaloo, Vicksburg, Mileston, Clarksdale, Ruleville, Indianola, Greenwood, and Greenville. There was also one performance in New Orleans.

Many celebrated actors and directors have recently become associated with the Free Southern Theater, either as sponsors or as technical advisors. These include Ruby Dee, Lorraine Hansberry, Geraldine Page, Sindy Pottier, Kim Stanley, Steve Allen, and about twenty-five other performers equally distinguished. Paul Sills, director of the famous Second City company in Chicago, has offered to come to Mississippi with several Second City actors to establish an acting workshop and assist the Free Southern Theater company with improvisations.