

There are many things, positive and negative, which won't find their way into reports on the Residential Freedom School. They are the friendships which were formed, the growing up that a lot of the kids did while there, the fights that took place, and the private little conversations which were learning experiences, too, but which will never get recorded.

However, let me begin by explaining some of the things that went on - first in Chicago and then in Cordele, Georgia.

The first session began on July 2 in Chicago. John Love, Fannie Rushing, Sherron Jackson and Judy Richardson composed the staff for that first session. The first few days were ones of getting settled in the homes which had been found for the kids on the southside, and of getting to know each other and particularly the Chicago kids and the neighborhood they were to live in for 3 weeks. Most of the food for this session had been raised through the Chicago office. The rest of it was bought with whatever little money was at hand - which meant that many meals were meatless and many breakfasts cold. Food was prepared by the staff with the help of the kids. Dish-washing and general clean-up was also done in this way.

We had a cook-out on July 4th at the Indiana sand-dunes. The next day we began a somewhat structured program of workshops in the morning and Negro history (taught by the Amistad Society) in the afternoon, along with movies, other workshops or general sessions. For the first 2 sessions of Negro history we had a white member of the Society teaching the class. There was much complaining about this on the part of the kids: one of the girls from Americus told me - "There are white workers all over Americus and I come to Chicago and I see it here, too. We can't even teach our own history, we have to get a white woman to teach it for us." Since most of the staff was equally dissatisfied with this arrangement, it was agreed that only Negro members of the Society would teach the class. Some of the kids also found little interest in the ancient history of Africa - they felt too far removed from it. But when they began to cover the slave trade and Reconstruction they became much more interested. At one point two African chiefs from Sierra Leone came for dinner and had a short question and answer period following dinner. The kids asked them about teenagers in Africa, the food, how Africans felt about Negroes and why Africans didn't call themselves Negroes (to which one chief replied that he felt that all black people were Africans -- greeted by applause from the kids -- but that he might be referred to as a Negro in America and an African in Africa). I think it was a good experience for everyone since most had never had a chance to talk to or even to see their African brothers (except through the mythical image they'd been given on the screen).

In African history class the whole image of the African was discussed and the kids talked about the false impression their school books and movies had given them about Africans. When it was asked

why it was so important that American Negroes believe the myth about Africans, one of the group said, "'Cause if we ever knew that we were alike and stopped being ashamed of them, then we'd try and get together and we could really do something." They talked about the shame that they had formerly felt about Africans and that this was part of the technique of keeping them separated from their African brothers.

Sometime that week we also had a discussion of police brutality. I think the best part of that discussion came when the northern kids began talking about police brutality in the north. The Chicago guys (who were recruited through the Chicago office) talked about the brutality they had personally known - outside the movement - just on the block in the southside. One of the guys spoke of the beating he had received after being picked up for something someone else had done. I think it was then that the kids really began to realize the similarity of a poor Negro's relation to cops - north or south - and the fact that Negro cops would beat you up just as quickly as white cops ("a cop is a cop is a cop").

The second Sunday there we all went to the Muslim Mosque. Cassius Clay was there and spoke. Sherron was called out and after about 20 minutes we discovered that she wouldn't be allowed back in since she was considered a "hypocrite" (a Muslim who had denied the faith). Our group walked out of the Mosque in protest and later had a short explanation and discussion on the internal organization of the Muslims.

That week we also had Noel Day in to talk with the group about the problems of housing, education, etc. in their different areas and ways that they might go about trying to solve some of these problems. He was really able to draw them out in talking about some of their problems in these areas and they responded very well to it.

Sometime that week we also had a general meeting, exclusive of the staff, to talk about some of the problems which existed in the school. The meeting was called after a couple of near-fights earlier that day. In the meeting some of the kids asked how they could ever hope to organize other Negroes when they couldn't even get together themselves. The Chicago kids were put on the defensive (through various accusations that the Chicago guys were starting the fights) and claimed everyone was blaming everything on them. They said they could leave if people didn't want them. Kids began protesting that the Chicago guys should stay. Profit (Ala.) said that if the Chicago guys left the school, the rest of the group wouldn't learn as much, since the group had come to Chicago particularly to learn about the city and its people. The group also decided to revise the schedule, putting Negro history in the morning to leave the afternoon free for movies, invited guests, and workshops.

During the second week, Jesse Gray came over to talk about rent strikers and how they are organized. He talked about problems he had run up against while organizing the ones in New York. He also said he believed that only blacks should lead civil rights organi-

zations, mainly because he didn't trust any white man to do right by the Negro. Partly because of his adamance on this subject, only a few of the kids took issue with him directly during the session. But there was much discussion among themselves and with staff members following the workshop. Many felt they agreed with Gray but a few disagreed with the absolute way he presented it, relating some good experiences they'd had working with some white volunteer workers.

Larry Landry also came by that week to talk about Chicago problems and to talk also about means by which Negroes can use their money to gain some power.

That week we showed "Animal Farm" in this great animated cartoon form (which I'd recommend showing to any age-group), followed by small group discussions. The picture really got to the group and some really good things were brought up as a result. In my group we started off on the question of what the kids had seen in the film.

Allan (Maryland) said he saw the animals as Americans and the pigs as communists trying to take over. I asked if he knew what communism was and he said, sure, 'cause he'd read about it in school. We then talked about what he'd read about Negroes and Africans in his school books. The group went on to discuss how much students are able to question the image they're taught about their African brothers, or in fact, how much they can question anything. It was generally agreed that education "taught" us not to question and that therefore, we couldn't just accept what schoolbooks said about communism either. Then another guy said he saw the animals as Negroes and the humans as whites. We talked about that for awhile and then someone said she saw the pigs as "toms" and the animals as the rest of the Negro people. We then discussed the way the pigs acted in the film after the revolution and that brought on a whole discussion of "toms" and the role of leadership. Kids began comparing "recognized leaders" in their hometowns and how they were like the pigs in the picture -- that their "leaders" lived apart from the poorer people, that they had formal education--which they used against other people -- and that they felt they were better than the rest of the Negroes in town. The northern kids talked about "toms" in elected office and the difficulty of removing them. I asked if they felt you could get good people into elective office by running them yourself, instead of letting the city pick the ones it wants to run. Alan said a Negro couldn't get elected since most Negroes in Cambridge won't vote. He said that they didn't care. I asked if it wasn't just that they didn't have anything to vote for. Then he said that even if this were the case, they'd have no one brave enough to run. Most people, he thought, would be too afraid of losing their jobs. Then Kathleen (Somerville, Tenn.) mentioned that even if someone did run, Cambridge might have the same problem Fayette County had, which was that the whites simply never counted the Negro votes in the election.

We talked about Julian's campaign a little and I asked if they felt it did any good to run a "freedom candidate" even if you thought he couldn't win. They all felt there was. Earl (Cordele, Ga.) felt it would show the white folks that Negroes intended to fight them.

too, for the right to pick the kinds of candidates they can choose from. Someone else said it would show, in still another way, that Negroes were no longer afraid of whites. And someone else referred back to Julian's campaign and said it would enable us to bring up issues like housing, ASCS elections, surplus food, and other things which usually don't discussed during elections. And then Allan said, "And, besides, our candidate just might win."

We also showed "Viva Zapata" and "I Was a Fugitive From a Chain Gang", both of which kinda shook the group up. Unfortunately, they were both shown during those last days whose night were taken up with keeping a fight from becoming a major war, so the discussion of both films was mainly done in small informal groups. But you could see from the way references would be made to the pictures during other discussion, that the group really understood the content of the films.

The third week, charlie cobb and Stokely Carmichael came up and each held a good session on the differences the group felt existed between the north and south: in housing, jobs, schools, etc. Also during that third week Mrs. Reese came in and held writing and literature workshops, reading poems by Negro authors and describing some of the things Negro authors have written about. During the second week the kids had written and practised a play which they called "Nigger" but because of the events and general tension which existed during that third week (and which will be elaborated on later) they never performed the play.

During the week we also had a reading of Negro poems by the youth counterpart of the Amistad Society. It wasn't particularly good, mainly because of the uninteresting way in which it was presented but some of the group enjoyed it (though most were bored with it).

That third week we again had a general meeting to discuss some of the problems of the school. The night before, I had asked Profit (Ala.) what he was going to do after graduation. He replied that he had been intending to go north, but now he realized it was just as bad there so he was gonna stay in Alabama and fight it there. This led to a discussion of Chicago and the Chicago kids. Profit was living with the leader of the Chicago "gang" and said he'd been talking to the Chicago kids and, having been in a gang himself in Selma, he understood some of the things that were happening. He talked about the problems that exist in a home where the mother and father are both out of the house most of the time and of the fights that go on between the parents when they are home. He said the reason the gang was so tight was that they didn't have anyone else so they had to make sure they kept each other. He talked about some of the "better-than-you" attitudes of the other kids in the school. I suggested he call a meeting the next morning to discuss some of these things with the other kids. He wasn't sure at first whether the Chicago kids should be included in the meeting since he might shut some of the kids up. Later he talked to one of the other

kids and they decided that it would be unfair to exclude the Chicago guys since the meeting could give the guys a chance to express their feelings about the whole thing and the meeting could be a learning for all concerned.

The next morning, Profit chaired the meeting and it ended up with people walking out or being put out by Profit because they were upsetting the meeting. But some things did become clearer '1 through the meeting (such as the fear that most of the kids had of the the Chicago guys). The group talked again about whether colored people could ever expect to stick together if this small group couldn't even do it. Some kids felt that you just don't talk to people you don't like; you stay away from them and then there won't be any fights. But others felt this was the easy way out. At one point, somebody said, "If you don't like somebody, don't associate with him," to which Profit answered, "Then how do you learn from them if you don't associate with them?" The girl replied, "Whatever they know will be written down in history, anyway." Profit got hot and answered, "Oh, girl, you know history ain't never told nothin' right, yet!"

The meeting eventually degenerated into a yelling match but it showed how little the Chicago guys felt a part of the freedom school and it showed, too, that unless something could be done to make them feel a part, they would completely destroy it.

charlie cobb was introduced just before the meeting broke up and happily turned it in a positive direction again by talking about a workshop he'd just been to for the Freedom Corps in Mississippi. He said that there, too, the kids were fighting among themselves and that in the workshop they finally decided 3 things, and he wrote them on the board: "Niggers can't get togheb", 2) "Niggers can't stick together" and 3) "Niggers ain't shit". He then asked the kids how they felt about the statements. They started talking about their opinions of what he'd written and began describing some of their experiences in their hometowns to prove or disprove the statements. Talking about home and common experiences served to bring them back together a little and we broke for lunch.

That third week we also had Casey Hayden over to talk about the poor whites she'd been working with in conjunction with the JOIN project on Chicago's northside. She related very well to the kids and got over some of the hangups they had in listening to a white person with a southern accent talking about poor whites in Chicago. She talked about some of the problems of organizing poor whites -- the main one being that they had no movement to relate to and be part of the way Negroes did. The kids understood this and understood, too, when she spoke of the difficulty of getting poor whites and Negroes together. The kids talked about some of their own feelings towards whites and particularly poor whites. They said poor whites were always the ones who gave the most trouble, and that it would be difficult to get over the bad feelings each side had for the other.

Sometime during the latter part of the Chicago session, we also had a discussion of violence and nonviolence. They talked about it in terms of on and off the picket line. Dinez (Cambridge, Md.) said she used it only as a tactic for the cameras. None of the kids who spoke had taken nonviolence as a philosophy. Most of the Chicago kids talked about violence in their terms -- you hit first to keep from getting hit yourself. But at one point Butch (Chicago) said he fought on the block because there was nothing really to fight for, but on the line he was nonviolent because he was fighting for something. This discussion on violence grew out of a workshop that charlie had been conducting on education and the kinds of things they'd like to see taught in their schools if they could determine the curriculum. They decided on the usual subjects--math, art, English -- with the addition of Negro and African history. That discussion went on for awhile prompted by charlie's questions. Then he stopped asking any. For a few moments there was just silence and someone asked why he wasn't asking any more questions. He said because he had no more questions to ask. They tried to get him to ask some more questions and again he said he really didn't have any more. There was general murmuring and some embarrassed laughter and then one of the kids told him to say something and charlie wrote that on the board: "Say something." Finally one of the kids, Dinez, said, "Okay, I've got a question, What things do you like most in the freedom school?" When Pat (St. Louis) said she liked the workshops best, she was asked what topic she would like to talk about in them and she said nonviolence. It was then that they got into the above-mentioned discussion.

The day before we left Chicago, there was a major blow-up in the evening with the members of the "gang" (which will be discussed later). The interesting thing about it was that we were warned of its coming when Sherman (Chicago) wrote a poem on the board that afternoon. Sherman was a kid in the "gang" who never seemed to be around when fights broke out. It was as if he didn't want to be put in a position of fighting with the gang against the rest of the school, but yet he also couldn't afford to be against them either so he just wasn't around when things started happening. That afternoon, he started writing down 10 times in a line: "Niggers are ____." Then he (and later Butch) filled in the blanks with the adjectives: hateful, loveable, destructive, POWERFUL, greedy, masterful, GREAT, COOL, cunning, brainy, choicey; and finally, "Niggers are where it's at!" But then, a little later, he wrote:

Tombstone time
Graveyard mind
Were the French Counts
And don't mind dying
All for one and
One for all
Divided we stand
Together we fall.

Some of us talked about the ominous tone of the poem but thought nothing more about it. That night the blowup came. The next night, after a picnic on the grounds of the Museum of Science, we left for Cordele, having spent three weeks in Chicago.

CORDELE

We left for Cordele late Thursday night by bus and arrived late Friday night. A together, twenty-five kids went to Cordele. We took only 2 guys from Chicago and those two weren't members of the "gang". I sometimes wonder the difference a place like Cordele would have made in the Chicago kids but we felt it was too risky to try it.

Through prior arrangement with the Presbyterian Church, we had secured the use of Gillespie-Selden Center and the 2 rooms of the Vocational Building back of the Center. All this was done over the strenuous objection of Mr. Brown, superintendent of the Center. The next day was spent taking the group to their homes and taking short "tours" of the town, "guided" by some of the local kids. Before the tours we had a general session where Earl (Cordele) talked about his home and some of the things the movement had been doing there. We also gave a brief run-down of what had been happening in the rest of Southwest Georgia (Baker County and Americus were erupting then). That night we talked about the demonstration that was to go on at the state park the next day (Sunday), and asked if they wanted to participate. All but one decided to go and so, after canvassing the churches in the morning with some of the kids, we went to the park. No real trouble there except for threats from groups of young whites. After the kids finished swimming in the pool, we left.

The next day a grand-jury hearing had been scheduled to hear charges against Rev. Abbott (stationed in Cordele by the Church as a intermediary between us and Mr. Brown). He'd been charged with obscenity by the female manager of the local restaurant during a demonstration there. The freedom school group went to the courthouse but the hearing didn't get into open court. Later that morning we had a discussion of trials the kids had been part of or had witnessed. The Philadelphia guys talked about the kangaroo court they had been sentenced by after one of them had been beaten, following a demonstration. That got us on to the subject of what schools use to stop teenagers from participating in the movement. The kids from Alabama talked about the cooperation they'd gotten from school officials mainly, they said, because the kids were united and also because King's presence made it easier for the teachers to support the movement. The kids from Mississippi talked about the difficulty of organizing the kids at their school, in the face of threats of either not graduating or of failing. Carrie (Ala.) said they had no trouble with that in Montgomery, since the top football players at their school were in the movement. The players were usually able to "convince" most students to participate. The group decided that the one way to protect yourself against intimidation by school officials was to organize.

We continued talking about school boycotts and how they're organized. The Chicago kids started talking about their boycott and the pressures that were used against them. The topic seemed to be one which really interested everyone and they enjoyed listening to the experiences each had had with some of the same problems.

The group had seen a "white only" sign above a fountain at a nearby gas station and after the discussion, went to test it. The usual scene ensued: station attendant enters with gun, other whites gather, local cop arrives, white pokes one of our kids with gun, whites spit on few of kids, staff member (John Love) goes down with kids to swear out warrant. The "white only" sign was covered over following the incident.

On Tuesday the group again went to court for a little while and again all proceedings took place behind closed doors. That morning, we had a really good discussion on just about everything. I'll go over a few of the things which were covered. I had asked Hissman, a local guy, to explain what would be covered in the mass meeting that night. He mentioned the bi-racial committee to which the 200 people at the previous week's meeting had elected 6 representatives. He also mentioned that a guy from the government's Community Relations Department was in town. We talked about the role of appeaser which the Relations men usually play in a situation like Cordele. Profit said, "Sure, they're only trying to slow you down. The bi-racial committee will never work." Hissman said we should wait and see -- that it might. He said it depended on who was on it, and that Cordele had only one "tom" on theirs. Dinez (Cambridge) started talking about the bi-racial committee which was called for in Cambridge when it began erupting. She said, "We had no 'toms' on ours, but it still didn't work -- it was never suppose to. It was just suppose to 'get the niggers off the streets'." After that happened and promises were made from the white side, it took months before anything got done. And when it did get done, it was only a quarter of what had been promised. The few more jobs we got were just *CAW jobs. The bi-racial committee, meanwhile, had stopped meeting since it had no power anyway. Robert Kennedy came down and promised alot, but when he left, everything was the same as it had been before he came."

We talked also about the housing in the north. Someone said it was because people didn't care about the way their houses looked. Ora (Ruleville, Miss.) said the reason people cared in the south was because they owned their own places, but in the north, no one owned anything. Carrie (Montgomery, Ala.) said she thought people were just cleaner in the south, to which Rabbi (Chicago) said that it was impossible to try and take care of any place in Chicago since the garbage man didn't come by but a few times each month and since the landlords never made any repairs. He said, "People are so stacked and cramped together, no one can keep their place clean." Sherron then gave a typical example of what it took to get something done at an apartment house on 117th Street in New York.

The group was very interested in the story and we got onto the whole question of whom you protest to. Martha Kocel (who had come down for the Cordele session) then related a case which she had witnessed where a guy tried to protest a case of police brutality against another guy and got beaten himself. We talked about what happens in a city when an individual protests -- that

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the city is really ~~only~~ threatened by numbers and by the visibility of those numbers. We got back on the subject of Detroit and talked about the fact that although 76% of the Negro dropouts there have no jobs; 70% of Negroes with diplomas also have no jobs. Jackie (Chicago) said her own garbage man was a college grad with a fluency in French. Bud (Pine Bluff, Ark.) then asked why the guy didn't protest for a better job and Jackie asked how one man alone could do that effectively. Carrie (Montgomery, Ala.) told Bud that he could graduate from college and 20 years from now he wouldn't have any better job than she had with her high school diploma. She said diplomas meant very little when you were black, except for a few. Martha mentioned the people who starve everyday in Detroit because of lack of proper diet. Bud said they should have come south and gotten a job. Rabbi replied, "For \$3.00 a day?" We then began to talk about the need as well as the nonexistence of a large-scale organizing effort in the north similar to that which is being done in the south.-- that the country tried to point to the south as the problem area for Negroes in order to cover up the similar but more subtle problems in the north.

Somewhere in there we also talked about Chicago's political machine and the graft and corruption that exists during election (both Jackie and Rabbi had worked on the campaign to overturn Dawson in 1964). Jackie talked about the ways in which poor people are made aware of the fact that they can easily be taken off welfare if they vote the "wrong way" and that there are ways of finding out how people vote, as well as of invalidating the "wrong votes". She talked of the fixing of machines and the buying of votes and then said, "In the south, white folks kill the vote with guns; in the north they kill it with chicken and wine."

At some point in there Profit finally said (expressing his whole desperation at realizing he could no longer escape to the north), "Let's just blow the whole world up", and Carrie repeated that now immortal phrase, "Yeah, if we can't sit at the welcome table with 'em, we'll blow the fuckin' legs off it!" This was their way of saying, "All right, now we know the north's as bad as the south -- but where do we go from here?" It was then that Martha talked about the need for organizers in the north such as those working in the south, but in an even greater number. That one of the problems with the north was that no one was doing the kind of organization there that was being done in the south. Carrie and Profit then said that they would agree to go north and fix things up after they got through with Alabama. And I think that was important. For it showed that they now understood that they couldn't escape it. They realized that the way to fight it was by staying home and grappling with it there. And, most important, they had retained the hope with which to do this.

That night we went to the mass meeting. The Community Relations guy was there and explained that the reason the meeting of the bi-racial committee had been called off was because he and the city were both confused about who really represented the Negro people of Cordele. Some other people later spoke, also, in regard to the Committee.

The

The next morning we had a discussion on the mass meeting and the roles the various people had played (i.e. the Community Relations man, a local teacher, and some other local people who had spoken). Somebody said there was a need to negotiate and Profit answered, "Why negotiate? They know what you want already. Demonstrate today; negotiate tomorrow. We've been waitin' since 1619 -- we're not gonna wait no longer." We talked about how you work around "toms". Some kids suggested that you treat them the same as you treat white folks-- as your enemy. Someone else said you try and convince them to think your way. And then somebody said he felt that if you had enough community support you didn't have to worry about "toms" because then they couldn't do anything anyway. We then talked briefly about how you get community support. Most felt that you got it by "talking to enough people about something so that they understand it the same way you do."

Later in the afternoon, Sherron Jackson and John Love gave a workshop on Black Nationalism. It was more or less a history of Black Nationalism up through the present Muslim movement. Sherron talked about this and about its internal organization, as well as its contradictions. We got into a discussion of the orthodox Moslem religion and Sherron sang one of the prayers used in the Moslem service. It was one of the few times that it was quiet enough to hear a pin drop. Afterward she described what the words meant. We then talked briefly about how black people are used against each other and then broke up.

The next day we went to Americus for the demonstrations. Unfortunately, they had been postponed because of the white boy's death. We were told upon arrival to go out and preach nonviolence to the local folk. We then decided that the kids should have an orientation by the SNCC guys on the project. All was well until Mahone said the moratorium had been called to give the cops some time to find the killers. The kids started shouting at him and Carrie said, "The white folks never called a moratorium when Jimmie Lee Jackson was killed", and one of the girls from Mississippi chimed in, "And they didn't call one for James Chaney, either." One of the white legal staffers then said that Mahone had only meant that it was just out of due respect to a death -- white or black. This brought on the same kind of response from the kids. We were able to get most of the kids to canvass by explaining that instead of preaching nonviolence, they should talk about the boycott and that night's mass meeting and try and feel out how the community felt about the whole thing. Most agreed to do this.

Sometime later we found about 10 of the kids outside the Freedom Center arguing with 2 SCOPE people about leadership. As we arrived, one of the SCOPE kids asked if they didn't think Dr. King was their leader. Dinez yelled, "Hell, no! I'm my own leader." It started getting kinda spirited and Dinez suggested they carry it inside, where they carried it into a discussion of violence and what it would mean to have an armed revolt in this country. We went to the mass meeting that night and then back to Cordele.

The next day -- Friday -- the kids left for home.

Well, I guess we now get to the evaluation part. And maybe I'd simply list what I learned from the whole thing, in the form of commendations. But before I do that, I'd like to explain a little about some of the fighting which went on and the reasons for it. One thing, I don't think it could have been avoided. Given the situation -- hot days (and the incidents always occurred on the hot-days), the ghetto, the Chicago guys (for whom violence was a way of life and the answer to anything they didn't understand, which in this case was us), and the tension which every kid there had, (as a result of living 24 hours a day in pure hell) -- the fights were inevitable. Unfortunately, I hadn't foreseen the inevitable and was shaken and confused when it occurred. I'm writing this so that others can understand it when it happens.

Fights would start over small things: because someone pushed against someone else (either in fun or in an attempt to start something), because a couple of guys' roughhousing had suddenly become serious, and because of ordinary, everyday personality clashes.

But in talking to someone about the fights I was made to realize that there was something positive which came out of them. For fighting made the southern kids realize that the kids they were coming from Chicago were much different from the kids they knew at home. And through living in the ghetto they eventually understood these differences existed. They understood what the atmosphere of a northern ghetto will do to a kid -- because they found themselves caught up in this same atmosphere, reacting in the same violent manner that the Chicago kids did to certain situations. It's a shame that that understanding had to come in such a traumatic manner for the kids (and the staff) but it did come and that was good.

I guess I should also mention what we wanted to come out of the trip when we planned it so that my recommendations have some frame-

Briefly, we felt that the southern kids should see what the life was really like for Negroes. We felt that some of the hope that the southern kids had about doing something to change their situation would rub off on the northern kids they met at the school. We also felt that through the realization on the part of all the kids that the same man was on the back of all Negroes -- north and south -- would come a bond which would allow for some feeling of unity among the kids and perhaps some unity of action. We knew, too, that they could learn from each other about many different things if they were given the opportunity of talking together.

We placed the first session in Chicago because it would allow the southern kids to see a northern ghetto first-hand, and the second session in Cordele because it would allow the northern kids this opportunity in terms of the south.

So, now for the recommendations:

Putting the RFS on the southside of Chicago for 3 weeks was, as someone put it, like trying to have a stiff meeting in McComb. If I had it to do over again, I would make the stay on the south-

McComb kids had in Harlem. We didn't realize the importance of the fact that there is no organized group like HARYOU on the southside that the kids could fit into. We brought movement kids to a place where there was no movement and where their frustrations at what they saw could have no constructive outlet. And so, the kids were homesick, not only for home, but for the movement and action which they were part of at home. What happened to the kids was that the negativism of the ghetto brought out the very worse in them.

= That's mainly what I learned from the school. We left Friday, August 6, because it seemed that the kids needed to get back home and think about what had happened at the school.

I think we learned, too, in Chicago that we've either got to learn how to work with the guys off the block or we shouldn't mess with 'em -- 'cause this in-between stuff can get 'ya near killed (speaking from experience). We went into the southside talking about "freedom", which to the southern kids meant the vote, education, eating where you wanted to, etc. But "freedom" to the southside kids meant getting out of the ghetto and they couldn't really see how this fit into what the southern kids were talking about -- and you don't get out of the ghetto with nonviolence. So their reaction to us was one of confusion and not-understanding which they tried to hit out against.

But I think the Chicago kids got something out of the whole experience, too. I once asked Sherman (Chicago) after a general session, what he thought of the session. He said he liked it and I asked if he thought anything had been decided. He said, "No, but I like listening to the things people said during it". See, I think maybe one of the things that happened to the Chicago kids was that the fact that black people were really fighting in the south became more real to them -- and it became real through the kids they met who were a part of that fight. Profit said he sometimes had long talks at night with Butch, Hillary and some of the other kids from the gang. He said he learned a lot from these talks and it's possible that Butch and Hillary learned something, too. Maybe the hope Profit still had that he could do something to get "the man" off his back got passed on to them.

As the kids left that night from Cordele, they talked of doing it again next summer. Because, I think, they realized that they had learned things from each other, and, more importantly, they realized that they could learn from each other.

- Judy Richardson
SNCC