

URBAN ORGANIZING

Ivanhoe Donaldson ^{reported on} ~~talked about~~ ~~presented~~ his project in Columbus, Ohio; ~~a full report in writing will be circulated to the staff. The~~ He expressed agreement with Bill Hall's ~~who had presented a written~~ report (on his work in Harlem) that ~~the~~ ^{would be} the important area of struggle for Negro rights ~~was~~ the North, ^{and above all,} ~~But Ivanhoe went on to~~ ~~say that he believed that~~ ~~the~~ ~~city~~ ~~was~~ ~~the~~ ~~key~~ ~~situation~~ ~~because~~ ~~that~~ ~~is~~ ~~where~~ ~~the~~ ~~major~~ ~~conflicts~~ ~~of~~ ~~interest~~ are taking place; that is where America's corporate structure is based; that is where the media and the universities are controlled. ^{in our urban society} ~~The major interest was in the~~ middle-class, college-educated, ^{are the major interest} salaried people. The lower class was its ~~no longer had~~ labor ~~force~~ but its dependency.

The Urban area

The city presents big problems: where is there enough public democratically authority to deal with all that power and all those conflicting interests? Should a city have one government or many neighborhood governments? Ivanhoe believed the second way was possible, and that it would counter-act the feeling of powerlessness in the ghetto

In Columbus, Ohio, a "community foundation" has been set up as a model of neighborhood self-government. It covers an area 30 blocks wide and 14 blocks long; 7000 people live there. These people (black and white) elect ^{ed} a board of the community foundation, ~~and~~ this board decides how money will be spent in the community (it makes grants from contributions by the people to the foundation) how people will vote (it gave the vote to all residents who are 16 and over), etc. In ~~the~~ ^{effect,} the community incorporated itself for the purpose of government ^{high} participatory democracy. ~~The foundation has~~ A Community Congress ~~which~~ ^{has} met twice, with/2000 people present each time. They elected the board. They aim to build up a treasury, and already have \$1500; they will hire the unemployed. They are trying to get \$200,000 ~~from~~ in anti-

poverty funds, but the government has never given OEO money

that way. *They also have a community center in a building donated by a local church.* would
Many questions were asked by the staff. ~~xxxx~~ How/the

community foundation would stand up against strong external
what would it do if
forces -- ~~xxxxxx~~ the city announced it was going to put a
thruway through that neighborhood? Ivanhoe felt that power
does not lie in the courthouse but in people, and that ~~xxxxxx~~
they could fight such a decision ~~by~~ themselves. # One person felt

Another question: ~~xx~~ how could the community possibly become
independent economically? No ~~xxxxxxxx~~ easy answer; this is the
big question everywhere.

that the community foundation was such a threat to the Est blishmen
that it would eventually be up against the police force -- what
then? Ivanhoe admitted that the people in the area were ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~
talking about doing things that he wasn't equipped to help
organize.

Ivanhoe was asked why he picked Columbus instead of Atlanta,
where SNCC has a real foothold through Julian Bond (people then
program Julian had planned/ for his district
asked what/~~Julian's program was~~ but there was no information on
this). He replied: ~~that~~ 1) the ^{it was a} building ^{for the center} and ~~set up~~ were available
in Columbus; 2) the home-rule program he had been working on in
D.C. didn't work out, so he went on to Columbus; 3) he felt
Julian's district ^{should be} was Julian's, ~~program.~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ It was
that there were urban areas in the South (Albany, Selma, ^{staff}
Montgomery) where SNCC had some experience, and that SNCC should
experiment in those places rather than going North.

At this point, Ivanhoe said he had just realized that his
Columbus program had never been approved by the ^{entire} staff or the
Executive Committee, because those bodies hadn't met in 2 months,
and he asked for approval now.

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SNCC willing to experiment in urban areas? (1)

~~ix~~ In the discussion, Jim Forman maintained that any organization has the right to experiment. The main issue was not Ivanhoe's right to go to Columbus, but to what degree was SNCC willing to experiment in urban areas? John Lewis said he hadn't know where Ivanhoe was, and ~~this~~ had been embarrassing. A vote was taken, ~~and~~ 17 to 6 in favor of continuation of Ivanhoe's program. (1) Afterward, Hunter Morey said he felt SNCC was not serious about its work; that we assume there is some mysterious pattern in the things we do, but what is it? ~~Maybe~~ Marion Barry stated that he felt we should have discussed all programs and then made ^{the} decision on Ivanhoe's program within that context. Our method was too haphazard; we should make decisions in a cohesive way -- or quit and play poker.