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(The following is an article written for the U.S. Information Service in June 1964 by Mississippi summer volunteer Peggy Reimann.)

On August 28, 1963, I watched the many faces and listened to the songs of the people who participated in the March on Washington for Freedom and Jobs. I watched them as we listened together to the Reverend Martin Luther King and to John Lewis speak about the significance of the March. But I was not a part of that March; I was watching it on television from a hospital for crippled children just outside New York City where I was working as a counselor.

A small audience of children and staff members heard the Reverend King say that the March was a gesture and a promise for us all, and even six-year-old Mack, the youngest child present, sat before the screen fascinated.

Dr. King's speech was glorious and hopeful, but John Lewis spoke almost bitterly of the future. He was afraid that the March was only a statement about the past with no promise for the future. He said the March could be meaningful only if it were followed by constructive action. People had to be willing not only to gesture but also to work, and the federal government had to be willing and able not only to talk with integrationist leaders but also to take direct action.

Because I thought that so much of American social action has been simply gesture and talk and because I had felt guilty all summer about being only a passive sympathizer with the civil rights movement, I was especially impressed with John Lewis's speech. I thought that strong feelings alone were useless. I had already decided that I would raise money for the civil rights movement during the winter and that I would work in the South during the summer of 1964, but on that day I was able to formulate why I had made that decision, and I was glad.

Now, one week from the real beginning of my summer work, I am still glad. During the past year I have prepared both psychologically and materially for what is now this summer. Moving from my birthplace, New York City, to

Portland, Oregon, where I attend Reed College, has changed my attitude toward my former home. I am no longer quite a New Yorker. I live wherever I am, and this summer Mississippi will be my home.

I have also more actively prepared for the summer. Although I was extremely busy during the past academic year, taking both art and academic courses, I did not wait until June to ~~wa~~ start work on the Mississippi Project. Fellow students and I recruited a total of thirteen Reed students for the Mississippi Project, and together we raised \$1300 toward our summer support. In May I received my assignment and other information from EOFO. School ended and we finished our last job in preparation for the summer: we loaded a car with books, clothes, and food to go to Mississippi. As my friend drove off in that car, I wanted to get in and go along; another month of waiting seemed too long. But I still had June to stay and think and wonder.

Now June is nearly over, ~~and~~ I am about to leave, and I am worried about possible difficulties. We may be mistrusted by nearly everyone; there is little reason for Southern Negroes to trust me, a strange Northern white girl, and very good reasons for Southern whites to distrust me. I am afraid that I or other workers may be attacked by whites or by "the law." Most of all I am afraid that the Project will not be a success and that the nation and the federal government will still remain indifferent and largely irresponsible.

More than frightened, however, I am respectful of the movement and proud of its members. I see it as the first large movement in my lifetime which has managed to avoid a bureaucratic structure and attitude. It has chosen an instrument--nonviolent action--which is both expedient and appropriate to its goals. It is a vital movement, having been organized, not by leaders who wanted a following, but by individuals who recognized the need for group action. Its leaders participate directly in the daily and sometimes

dangerous activities. And this movement, if successful, will free not only the Negro people of this country. Perhaps it will free us all of the common assumption that power is an indication of superiority and that individual lives and actions are meaningless and small.

from parents of Peggy Reimann:

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