SOMETHING is happening in Mississippi today which the press has largely ignored. This quiet, sleepy state stands for beatings and bombings, church burnings and fear. These are real enough. But Mississippi today is also the scene of another phenomenon, of a new development.

The white volunteer in the Summer Project, or the visitor like myself, who comes to get to know the Negro community of some town which has been "opened up" to Greenwood, Tallahatchie, Holly Springs, or Clarksdale, finds that the local people but they stop him, greet him, ask how long he is stay- ing, does he know where he’s going. There is also in the Movement. Without seeming "grateful", a better-off Negro will insist on paying for his dinner. And the Negro community quickly becomes home. He feels safe there, a new presence, one that he wears proudly. Whether white worker, he State. Suddenly everything is inverted with a white man comes a new identity. Not that the white man "becomes a Negro," but that the Negro begins to feel he has become a new self through others, through the very people who are, in some ways, his mirrors.

Inspirational dichotomy? No, just the experience of an American in one part of his country in one year. Things seem to be moving forward instead of standing still. Mississippi was once - and is still - the State where things happen. Today, hundreds of young people study the names of its counties and speak of them with emotion. In Greenwood, Tallahatchie, Holly Springs, or Clarksdale, the word "negro" can be learned from a blackboard where they are directed to the current struggle: civil rights; freedom; justice; action. As headquarters in Jackson known as the Center for Civil Rights. The project of this is the being called in the name of a rather mythical coalition of civil rights organizations: actually SNCC is doing 4/9 of the work - the students, through and old Black, is not unexpected. The Greenwood office, like Jackson's, is manned around the clock; workers eat, study, sleep, often on desks or sitting up in chairs. And Jim Forman, SNCC's executive secretary, says the floor at midnight.

REVOLUTIONARY CUBA comes to mind: there is the spirit of singing and the humor that is directed toward oneself as often as toward the enemy. The same is true of the climate in the same. To make this comparison may be a disservice to the Movement, for SNCC has smooth trouble with red-baiting. And of course what is happening in Mississippi today is comparable, in a sense to the political action.

But the project is a threat to the establishment, Southern order, and is meant to be. The red-coats that trend to convincing a handcart is the "new" Greenwood office of 11 a.m. and growing, "Kiss rash ass." Those above him on the social ladder are more valuable than those below him that pass by that same office on afternoon and left convinced in an unusual discussion with a large number of the project work vs. He admitted the reason for his opposition to Negroes voting - others.

It would be futile not to acknowledge some of the project's problems and weaknesses: the fear and resistance among local Negroes who have a little to lose; the limited success of the community; the limited success of the Freedom Schools; the conclusion and inefficiency. One of the key questions, which cannot now be answered, is: What happens when the white volunteers leave - or are, not all, are expected to do? This question arises not only in terms of violence but also in the less dramatic scale of disillusionment. For example, Sally Best, daughter of a GUARDIAN editor-in-chief, who has organized donated books into a library at Greenwood and must find a liberal local person to maintain in her absence.

PROBLEMS AND ALL, the spirit remains - and others wish to feel it too. An estimator: Jewish folk singer commented: "It reminds me of the Harlem Renaissance," which was in the 1930s, "but it's the fresh air. These people take pride and give them new meaning; the organizers interpret Biblical themes in ways I've never heard before - but ways that make sense." A local Negro, says: "It's a new kind of Negro. They're the same with beautiful people among Mississippi Negroes: In one sense, they don't seem deprived at all. She had, I thought, discovered that the Negroes have suddenly been raised as many sufferings feel, thinking primarily of the white inside. The South is Negroes, mostly; it is a rural and lower-class people (which haven't been made Negroes by technology), one-dimensionality.

And she went on to say: "I wonder what will happen to the white volunteers when they go back to their Northern, middle-class worlds. They may be very depressed." For the remarkable truth is, a great many of those who have been to Mississippi this summer are sorrowful when they come to see me.