Journey to Understanding

FOUR WITNESSES TO A MISSISSIPPI SUMMER

Introduction . . . . Howard Zinn

Neither a small army of newspaper correspondents, nor all the power of the electronic mass media, has been able to convey to the country at large the reality of Mississippi. Perhaps our senses have been bludgeoned in this century by too many images; fact and fiction have become indistinguishable, and now even the starkest horrors are only scenes in a global theatre of the absurd.

So it was not only desperation, but genius, that inspired the Mississippi civil rights workers a year ago to call for help from Northern ministers, lawyers, doctors, students, teachers, laborers. Their arrival last summer meant that a line of 1,000 people would begin moving back and forth across that desert of indifference (or worse: token concern) which has always separated the rest of the nation from the Deep South. Now—except for the 150 who insisted on staying—they are back North, creating little circles of unrest wherever they move, trying to communicate, as only one living being can to another in the freshness of his own astonishment, what it was like to be in Mississippi.

Those of us who have spent some time in that state return in turmoil and in awe. It is a place that stretches ceilings to their limits. There, in one place, you find the worst and the best of this nation: malevolence matched by courage, life confronting death. What one feels most is not despair, however, but indignation, because Mississippi, unlike South Africa, is part of a nation that professes liberty. Someone returning from Hell might want to convey to the world, not the nature of the Devil, which is already known, but the fact that what he endured took place within sight of God. Those home from Mississippi try to explain to their friends why it is not enough to belabor the warped officialdom of that state and its murderous deputies, and why the citizenry must press the point of moral responsibility hardest against those in the nation who have both the knowledge of right and wrong, and the power to change the situation. That means the President of the United States and the Department of Justice. There is too little outrage in the country to waste it on less than the federal government which, tomorrow, in all legality, could begin to transform the state of Mississippi as a model of purposeful social change.

In some ways, we ought to be grateful for Mississippi. A nation needs to look at itself in the most revealing of mirrors, and Mississippi is just that for the United States—*not* an oddity in a glass case, but a particularly ugly reflection of the rest of the country. Because of this, the sojourn there of 1,000 Northerners could have a special value. Prodded by what they saw, they now might begin to look with new vision into the mississippian crevices back home: into the back rooms of police stations, the municipal courts and the jails, the ghettos, the factories, the unemployment offices.

Rousseau once wrote: "We have physicists, geometricians, chemists, astronomers, poets, musicians, and painters in plenty, but we have no longer a citizen among us."

Who could have dreamed up a better plan to destroy popular government than to divide us all into self-sealing occupational groups and professional societies, each diverting civic energy to its own narrow end? But last summer some uncommon common purpose brought to various Negro communities in Mississippi a New York lawyer, a California carpenter, a Southern white minister, a Negro physician, a Yale philosopher. If we keep rubbing away at the traditional lines that divide us, we may yet build a body of citizens in America powerful enough to make democracy work.

Howard Zinn is the author of The Southern Mystique *(Knopf) and* SNCC: The New Abolitionists *(Beacon).*

The Lawyer . . . . . William M. Kunstler

It is impossible for one man to analyze the feelings of others in a given situation. As one of the many lawyers who spent part of the climactic summer of '64 in Mississippi, I can speak only in the most subjective terms. I hope, though, that from my personal experience I can strike chords common to those members of the bar who, like myself, found that being a civil rights lawyer was much more than knowing statutes or understanding precedents.

Recently, I was exchanging views with one of the many young lawyers who had volunteered to serve in Mississippi. "I didn't get a chance to practice much law," he said, "but I never felt more like a lawyer in my life."

In a phrase, this probably best expresses the feelings of every out-of-state attorney who responded to the call of the National Lawyers Guild and the Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee for legal help for the Council of Federated Organizations last summer. The opportunity to participate usefully in a profound social revolution more than made up for the limited access to its courts permitted by the state of Mississippi. And no lawyers ever had finer clients than the hundreds

William M. Kunstler, author of The Case for Courage, Beyond a Reasonable Doubt *and other books, teaches at New York Law School and Pace College. He is chairman of the legal advisory committee of COFO and one of three attorneys representing the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party*

of COFO volunteer and staff workers who conducted the voter-registration drives, ran the community centers or taught in the Freedom Schools.

In all reason, the practice of law in Mississippi should have been depressing. Lawyers look upon the courts with a respect born out of centuries of the common law, and it came as a bitter surprise that the judicial system of the Magnolia State is quite unable to be impartial in cases involving Negroes. Prisoners of the system, its judges and jurors are not free, in the context of race, to apply the law without fear or favor. The result is a total perversion of justice.

Yet despite the obvious hopelessness of every such case in which I was involved I found that, far from becoming morose, I was moved and exhilarated. The judge who valued his membership in the White Citizens Council more than he did his oath of office, the frankly prejudiced jurors, the openly hostile court attendants—none of them really counted because they were only temporary barriers on a broad highway that led inevitably to the triumph of morality. To survive as a human being, one had only to look beyond them to the road ahead.

But it took me some time to attain this spiritual resilience. In August of 1961, as I waited for the jury in the first Freedom Rider case to return its verdict, I was certain that it could not find a man guilty of breaching the peace who had done nothing more criminal than quietly ride a bus. I can still remember the paralyzing shock I felt when that all-white jury, in violation of every concept of American jurisprudence, arrived at a decision in which racism overrode the Constitution of the United States.

Three years later, I had come to realize that victories were not always triumphs, that a state of mind could mean more than a jury verdict. This ability to surmount "what is" by contemplating "what shall be" is, I am sure, the result of a metamorphosis that had taken place in me, both as a lawyer and as a man.

But Mississippi has done more than implant in me some philosophical shock absorbers. It has taught me that, to be a surrogate to the movement, one has to be a member of it in every sense of the word. In other words, the lawyer no more and no less than the Freedom School teacher or the voter-registration canvasser, possesses a skill which must be put to use in pursuit of the mutual goal.

In private practice, the lawyer is a detached being who views the conflicts that swirl about him as laboratory problems to be solved by the arts of his ancient profession. He is the ringmaster who, by the toot of his whistle or the snap of his whip, brings order out of chaos. For this performance, he expects and receives recognition in the form of money and prestige.

But the movement lawyer, once he has acclimated himself to the demands and dimensions of his new practice, sees a horizon utterly different from the one that defined his activities back in New York City or Chicago. He is activated, not by the promise of fame and fortune, but by the sharing of a common cause with those he represents.

The transformation does not come overnight. I can still recall with shame my earnest recommendation to a brother attorney during the Freedom Rider trials that he not address our clients at a mass meeting. "A lawyer must remain aloof," I told him. "If we become emotionally involved in our clients' problems we will not be able to be dispassionate courtroom advocates."

Three years later I realized that I was playing a fool's game and that my advice was worse than worthless. No member of a great social movement can remain untouched by the forces that drive it. When Clarence Darrow left his lucrative job as general counsel to the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad to defend Debs and his American Railway Union, his resignation was testimony that attorneys who would serve humanity rather than individual clients must do so with their hearts as well as their heads.

There is, of course, more to lawyering in Mississippi than exultation. The need to adapt legal principles, which are hardly geared to urgency, to the swiftly moving panorama of COFO activities was a most compelling challenge. The dynamics required to meet arrests in McComb, an injunction in Belzoni and a rash of unjustified traffic offenses in Greenwood, all occurring within hours of one another, confound prior experience.

Yet lawyers who had known only the leisurely pace of commercial practice quickly accustomed themselves to an emergency program of legal assistance. I can remember sitting in a Negro restaurant in

Jackson one evening as the various attorneys came in from the field. Their vivid tales of drawing writs of *habeas corpus* in speeding cars, or of roaming through the back roads in search of Negro property owners willing to go bond, were the measure of their transformation.

Mississippi in the summer of 1964 was the catalyst of a growing awareness that the law does not exist in a vacuum but is grounded in life. The young men and women who offered their bodies as a witness to the attainability of a just society shamed the American bar into standing beside them. For generations lawyers had looked aside while Negroes in the Deep South had been systematically dehumanized. All in the name of the law, black men had been driven away from the polls, segregated out of community life, forced back into a slavery every bit as intense as that which had theoretically been lifted from them 100 years earlier. Yet the legal profession uttered not one word of collective protest.

That lawyers should have ignored the plight of the Negro is the bitterest of paradoxes, for lawyers have a special obligation to create and preserve the equality on which our entire system of jurisprudence is expressly founded. On courthouse friezes across the land is engraved some form of the motto: "Equal Justice Under Law."

The law did not change in Mississippi last summer, but the lawyers who journeyed there did. All of us, suddenly and starkly conscious that we had failed in one way or another to live up to the solemn responsibilities of our profession, were grateful for the chance to justify our existences. What had started out as an adventure for many of us had abruptly changed into the lesson of our lives.

When I reflect today on my own involvement, I do not think of the courtrooms, the clerks' offices or the judges' chambers. I think of the young college girl manning the Jackson end of the WATS telephone line which brought news, good and bad, from the projects in the field. Or of the California carpenter pounding nails into the roof of a half-finished community center in Mileston. Or of the law student from New York being beaten to the ground by a Philadelphia ruffian.

I no longer know where the movement ends and the law begins. In fact, for me now there is no significant dividing line. The movement has given my life heightened meaning and purpose. In return, I have put at its disposal all the energies I possess. I hope that the exchange is not too greatly in my favor.

The Minister . . . Beverly Allen Asbury

Hundreds of clergymen of every faith have been to Mississippi in the past year. Almost all of them tell the same story, and I assume that, speaking for myself, I speak for many of them as well. However, I do not want to write about Mississippi; I want, rather, to tell what happened to me as a result of going to Mississippi. And before doing that, I must relate something of what was involved in my going.

Speaking before groups in recent months about my experiences in Mississippi, I have often started by presenting a "set of credentials." These have nothing to do with the experience itself but they bear significantly on my reasons for going, and they influenced my reactions when I returned North. I was born in Georgia and educated in the public schools there and at the state university. My family accepted segregation and taught their children to accept it. The training was more by attitude and act than by word. While most of the members of my family could be called "moderates," there was never any doubt that they felt segregation to be the proper system for the South. We had a Negro maid, a Negro cook, a Negro yard keeper; we even had occasional Negro playmates, until we went into the first grade. In our middle-class family we learned courtesy and politeness, but we never questioned our superiority to anyone of dark skin.

Once we were in school, we seldom saw Negroes of our own age. The only ones with whom I had contact were the servants around our home and the employees in my father's business. It now seems incongruous that we were able to love (within limits) those whom we knew personally, yet despise all those whom we did not know; but when I lived in this segregated system, I accepted it and believed in it —insofar as I thought about it at all.

My ideas began to change soon after I entered the University of Georgia. World War II had just ended and the place was overflowing with veterans. Those were unusual college days, and movements and organizations in the entire South were undergoing their first great changes in generations. Almost by accident, I became involved in the Student Christian Movement and, as a freshman, was invited to attend a conference in Atlanta where certain aspects of student Christian life across the South would be reorganized. When we arrived in Atlanta, we went to Morehouse College, and I mark my arrival there as the beginning of my slow evolution to a new life and a new perspective.

At this outstanding Negro college, I encountered Negro youths of my own age. I was assigned a room with two Negro students, and found that they were as intelligent, as human, as concerned as I. In a matter of hours, many of the stereotypes and fears of the segregated society collapsed. The water in their drinking fountains was like the water in fountains marked "white"; I caught no diseases using their toilets.

The agenda at Atlanta had to do with desegregation of the Student Christian Movement over the South. The conference introduced and educated me to the aspirations of the Southern Negroes of the postwar generation. The logic of their position and the appeal of their convictions seemed to me nothing less than what Christianity required.

Other things over the next few years altered my thinking. In junior year, I entered the Junior Orations and advocated the admission of Negro students to the University of Georgia—ten or twelve years before such an admission actually took place. During those same years it seemed to me, as it does now, that the church is one of the key institutions that must work to further the ends of social justice and human brotherhood. Despite what some of my Southern friends choose to think, my convictions in this regard were formed before I

Beverly Allen Asbury is pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church and pastor to the College of Wooster, both in Wooster, Ohio.

ever attended Yale Divinity School. In other words, when I left the South for the first time, I had already become an "integrationist."

The first three and a half years of my ministry were spent in a small town in eastern North Carolina. My relationship with the people in that community was good, although they knew my views. However, after the Supreme Court decision of 1954 and its implementation in 1955, things became more difficult, especially when several of us "younger ministers" openly advocated compliance with the desegregation decision. For a number of reasons, I finally felt called upon to move to Missouri in 1956. I say all this simply to establish the point that what I believe I have believed in the South; that what I speak I have spoken in the South; that what I practice I have practiced in the South. I still love the South. I respect and admire many of my friends who are in the South and who minister there under constant pressure and harassment. I have never felt that a Christian could do other than love those who through segregation deny love to others. However, as a Christian, as an American and as one raised in the South, I feel that the South is profoundly wrong in its racism, and that its racism has distorted the Christian message both in the life of the church and in society at large. I am no longer able to live and work in the South if it means soft-pedaling these convictions.

I have been outside the Deep South for the past eight years, first in Missouri and now in Ohio, and working for racial justice wherever I've been. As president of the Ministerial Alliance in a St. Louis suburb, I worked with other ministers and with CORE to achieve the desegregation of restaurants and public facilities in that community of 30,000. Last winter, when the United Presbyterian Church's Commission on Religion and Race became involved in Hattiesburg, Miss., an official of the denomination asked me if some of the ministers in Ohio would visit Mississippi to show our church's ongoing concern for the rights of all men. Another minister and I decided to go, as representatives of our Synod and our denomination. The Presbytery of Wooster, of which I am a member, acted through its General Council to support my decision and to stand ready with bond money if I were jailed. I had not expected such action, but it was a great support when our turn came to leave for Hattiesburg at the end of February.

This was a journey into a strange land which was not so strange after all. It was *not* strange because it was where I had been born, raised and educated. It *was* strange because, psychologically, morally and theologically, it stands at the opposite pole from where I now live. This land strikes one as strange because the only song one hears is for a war that was lost, for a day that is gone (if it ever existed), for a people who have died (if they ever lived). This land hopes to share in the prosperity and progress of a great and powerful nation, but it becomes foreign soil when it rejects the consensus of understanding of freedom, justice and fair play. This land threatens and intimidates; its ideology is fixed, and it closes out anyone who would dissent. The land that gave me life, I suddenly saw, would reach out and take that life away—for the sole reason that I was a traitor to the "holy cause of segregation."

The trip into this land reopened the past for me. I saw more clearly than I had in a number of years how the orthodoxy of segregation twists and perverts the minds of its young. I saw how the militancy of the armies of the Ku Klux Klan and the White Citizens Council silences or crushes those who dare to raise a voice of opposition. I witnessed again the easy acquiescence of the clergy in a pattern which they dared not challenge lest they sacrifice their "world." Much more significantly for me, for the first time I stayed in what we were taught as children to call "nigger town." I found that among the Negro people there were voices of dissent which echoed the voices that had come from within me in my later experiences of the South.

And as I walked around the Forrest County Courthouse in Hattiesburg, I found two symbols. One was the Confederate monument, the Forrest County pillar of salt, the spirit of segregation, stale, static and lifeless. But in the middle of that lawn was also the American flag, at first tattered and torn, but later in the week replaced by a new Stars and Stripes, representing for the Negro people of that community, more certainly than the crosses on the white churches just a few blocks away, the hope of the future for themselves and their children. At night, I discovered in church the real meaning of the Christian gospel—not in the white churches (if there be such a thing), but in the Negro churches, in the churches no "self-respecting" Hattiesburg white man would dare to visit. But if he dared, he might have found there, as I did, the genuine humanity which the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ discloses. Perhaps the Old Testament stories of Moses would have taken new meaning for him as they did for me when the people sang, *Set My People Free!*

As I heard the Negro people of Hattiesburg talk and sing, I went through an experience not unlike the one at Morehouse College some eighteen years earlier. This time it was not a matter of breaking down stereotypes and beginning to build convictions. Rather, it was an opportunity to put new personal content into already expressed convictions in word and action. It was an opportunity to come back and talk to students and adults throughout Ohio about what was going on in a section of our land. It was a time to remind Christians that there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all."

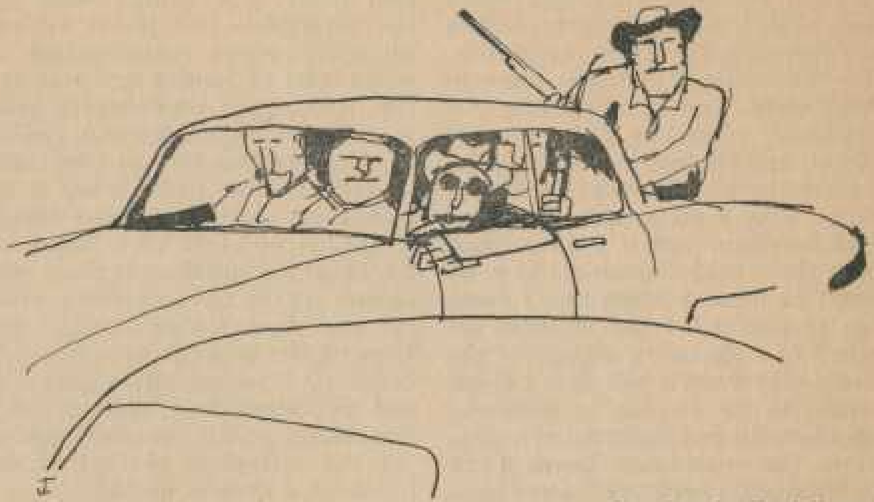
If I had ever felt that those going into the South to witness for racial justice were "outside agitators," I felt that way no longer. While I had the "credentials" to speak as a "Southerner," I knew that one did not need them to have the right to speak. I cannot accept the notion of anyone's being an "outsider." Anyone who allows that label to deter his involvement must face the question posed by Father Ricardo Fontana in Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy*: "Let us admit at last; these flames are also *our* trial by fire! Who will, in times to come, respect us still as moral arbiters if in *this* time, we fail so miserably?" That is the question that must be asked as Mississippi churches burn.

After coming back from a week in Mississippi, I was, and continue to be, invited to speak before a great number of groups, both inside and outside the church. I've encountered some hostility, but overwhelmingly the attitude has been an open-minded interest and eagerness to learn. Some of my friends and acquaintances in the South

have criticized me because I was willing to go back, but seemingly unwilling to go back to live. But many here in this college community feel that I represented them in an important witness. Since March, a large number of Ohio clergymen have made trips, and now almost every area of our state has been represented in Hattiesburg, Jackson, McComb, Canton and elsewhere. Students from Wooster, Oberlin and many other colleges went to Mississippi for the Council of Confederated Organizations' Summer Project. Professors and ministers from this area have come back deeply impressed and have joined in the local witness to the cause of human rights. Together, we are creating a new climate of concern, compassion and commitment. We find that many people are moved because our words have been backed up by our actions. And the interest we arouse is being translated, not only into new forms of action in the South, but into new dialogues in our own cities and churches.

All this has affected me in a good many ways. First, by going to Mississippi I have become more involved in the activities for racial justice in the state of Ohio. I have taken a more active and leading role within the cities of our Presbytery and in developing a Presbytery program which is well under way and producing good results. I have become better trained in the problems of and possibilities for residential desegregation and fair housing. I have found new friends, new allies, and I have discovered the effective centers of opposition to an open and equitable society. I know anew that changes do not occur unless you organize to create the conditions for change. Through membership on the new Ohio Synod Commission on Religion and Race I have met leaders of both races from every area of the state, and together we find that what we discovered about our nation, our faith, our churches and ourselves by going to Mississippi helps bind us together in a new commitment and understanding here.

Second, I find that something important has happened in the life of the congregation I serve and the campus to which I minister as a result of my having gone to Mississippi. And my experience has become a point of contact with those who are interested in human rights, but who for various reasons stand outside the life of the church. Before going to Mississippi, I discussed the venture with the officers of the church and with the congregation. A majority of the officers voted to support me, and stated their conviction that by taking part in this witness I was participating in a ministry of our congregation and denomination. In other words, I was given the time and the endorsement to go and to stand for them at this significant juncture in our national history. Not everyone in the church agreed with the officers, but within the church, and outside it, so many people approved what I was doing that sufficient money was contributed to offset almost all my expenses. The church has lost no members, and we seem not to have suffered financially, or in any of the other statistical ways about which so many church members seem to be concerned. On the contrary, we have discovered a deepening of our life together and a greater understanding of why the church exists and what its mission is in and to the world.



Drawings by Tomi Ungerer

Just a few weeks ago, I presented some of my concerns before a meeting of our congregation. I asked those present how they would feel if I were called upon again to represent the church in Mississippi. I told them that I had received one such call and had decided after a great deal of soul searching not to go. I went on to say that I was certain other calls would come and that I should feel the duty to respond immediately and positively to some of them. I asked how they would react if in an emergency I decided I must go without waiting to consult anyone.

Quite a few people spoke up; and some who were silent then, came to me privately later. Not one person asked me not to go South again. Rather, there was an overwhelming feeling in our church—expressed clearly and unequivocally by retired ministers and missionaries and their wives, students, faculty members and their wives, professional people from the town and others—that any such decision would be both trusted and supported. These people astounded me with their concept of the church as a community that exists for mission and *is* mission. They wanted it expressed in their pastor's life as well as in their own lives. I know now what I did not know before, that when the time comes for me to go to Mississippi again, I shall have the backing of close to 90 per cent of the congregation and the college community. So one of the things that has happened to me is to experience what I never experienced when I lived in the South—a community of support, encouragement and commitment. I have now met a people who ask not quantity of a minister's time but quality of leadership in a significant and relevant ministry.

Third, something has happened to my theological thinking as a result of the trip to Mississippi. Nearly twenty years ago at the University of Georgia I started considering the Christian ministry from a real concern for human beings. Later I found a theology to express that concern and to give it definition. Later still, perhaps, theological considerations somewhat replaced the human concern, but Mississippi

brought me back to people again and helped me put the theological understanding in a new perspective. The "established" churches I saw in Mississippi, and many of the "established" churches I see in the North, can be described only as religious ghettos. They have to be endured with a great deal of fatigue and boredom, and if I were faced with the attitude which exists in so many of them, I doubt that I could "go to church." I see in them too much of a desire to evangelize the world only when it will yield a direct return to the church in increased membership and financial contributions. The established church I saw in Mississippi holds itself aloof from the world, and the established church I see in Ohio and elsewhere too often refuses to risk itself for the sake of the world.

What I saw caused me to turn, as I turned years before, to an understanding of Jesus. My present theological mood looks increasingly to this Man, the "Man-for-Others." I look to Him as the paradigm of my faith, as the one who gives Himself to suffer at the hands of a godless world precisely out of love for that world. The church must use the persuasion and power of love to bring about reconciliation at every level of human and national life. It must pay whatever the price may be to create a faithful and effective structure for the alleviation of every human need. When it becomes the Church of Jesus Christ, it can do no other than follow its Lord into the suffering of those who cannot cry out for themselves. From my experience in Mississippi and from all the experiences which preceded it, I realize again that God can be known only through what Bonhoeffer called the participation "in the sufferings of God at the hands of a godless world."

No white person can speak for the Negro, describe what he feels, or tell what he wants. I know that I don't have the "credentials" to do that. But I have the "credentials" to identify with what the Negro tells us about himself. I have the "credentials" to stand with him—as a brother. I also learned that again, by going to Mississippi. And I learned that every human being has those "credentials." It is just that he must use them.

The Educator . . . Richard J. Bernstein

In the early fifties, when I started teaching at Yale, there was a general uneasiness among the politically liberal members of the faculty. The lament at that time centered upon the state of mind of the students. They seemed intimidated by, or indifferent to, the poisoned atmosphere created by McCarthy, they were "out for themselves," lacked a developed social conscience, were without a cause. Many of the liberal teachers — the attitude was characteristic of campuses throughout the country—were nostalgic for the thirties. That had been a time of heated political discussion, with students in the thick of radical movements. Why wasn't this generation of students more like what we had been (or like what we conceived ourselves to have been)?

There was an element of bad faith in this pose. Besides romanticizing and exaggerating the effectiveness of the radical past, it betrayed an unwillingness and inability to come to grips with new political realities. It was a time when liberals, of whatever generation, were seized by political impotence. They talked about the ills of modern society and were vociferous in decrying the forms of alienation and estrangement, but when it came down to what to do, they offered few concrete proposals.

In the decade since then, the outlook of American youth has changed dramatically. Out of a generation that never knew the depression, out of a generation nurtured on the myth of American affluence, has emerged a group sensitive to social injustice, committed to do something about it, and with a good practical sense of what must be done. I believe that the influence of this group is far greater than its numbers, and that their activity is re-educating America, reawakening our social conscience, and most important, pointing the way toward effective social action. It is from this perspective that we can begin to appreciate the value of the Mississippi Summer Project.

The situation in Mississippi last summer was fully reported, but the press did a good deal to distort what actually took place. The incidents judged noteworthy were those of violence and intimidation. In part, the Council of Federated Organizations was also responsible for playing up this aspect of the situation. Violence is nothing new in Mississippi, but for the first time the national spotlight was focused on it. However, the real heart of the project hardly ever hit the news; that was the day-to-day interaction between COFO workers and the Negro community working together for a common cause. Furthermore, the significance of the experience for the doctors, ministers, lawyers and others who went to participate, or just to see the project in operation, cannot be underestimated. My few days in Mississippi last summer were among the most intense, vital and meaningful in my life. And my experience was certainly not unique. Almost everyone I have met who spent some time in Mississippi, no matter how brief, came away with a similar feeling. This project did as much for the participants as for civil rights. It re-educated us about what civil rights really are. And through those who participated and observed, the spirit of the project is spreading across the country.

Many of us, even those who have been most sympathetic to the civil rights movement, have had their doubts about the value of such activities as the Mississippi Summer Project. First, there have been questions about the response of the Negro community itself. We may not accept the "official" Mississippi position that the Negroes are basically content with their lot and that all the trouble is being stirred up by outside agitators, but there is a more sophisticated version of the same argument. After all, isn't it true that the Negroes of Mississippi have been so intimidated that they lack the necessary consciousness and drive to achieve genuine freedom and equal rights? Isn't it true that a "slave mentality" still prevails among these Negroes, and that the hard-core leadership in COFO, especially SNCC, is responsible for the agitation? Of course, there is a determined, aggressive and militant leadership among Negro youth and without it little would have been achieved. But the most impressive

Richard J. Bernstein teaches philosophy at Yale University.