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Focus the New Negro [ARTICLE]

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Focus

The New Negro

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No long ago this country witnessed an upsurge of a new movement—a movement of youth dedicated to civil rights through non-violent techniques against extremist segregationists of the South (as well as the more subtle bigots of the "liberal" North). Now in its second year of existence the student non-violent movement is beginning to reap the benefits of its hard-fought battles against the now illegal "separate but equal" tradition.

But all this progress in civil rights must be viewed not only from the legal victories but also in context of the "New Negro" — the Negro who now can afford to go to college. This new middle-class Negro is demanding his right to be equal to the white man. He wants equality before the law, in the schools, and most important of all, he wants an equal opportunity to achieve economic success. Thus the movement can be seen in light of its middle-class roots and its demands for middle-class rights.

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If the movement is only geared toward middle-class status, one may rightfully ask, "What will happen when the Negro achieves his rights? Will he still utilize action and protest in order to give the Puerto Rican those same rights?"

There is a segment which is interested only in achieving Negro civil rights, but there is also a group in the non-violent movement dedicated to utilizing "government to revolutionize the social structure of our society." Certain young American Negroes have now, in a sense, become young revolutionaries. They are willing and determined to abolish all form of social oppression and they are implementing their ideas both in the North and South. At present Mississippi has become the pivot for most of this work, and progress is slowly being realized.

A social revolution in the South can only remain effective if the Democrat "old fogies" are either pressured into granting the Negro his freedom or are voted out of office and replaced with officials who are willing to meet the mounting demand for equality. The Negro...

have impeded the SNCC organizers from any large registration gains through violence and mob beatings of both the people registering and their leaders.

But this registration drive will continue even in the face of violence and bloodshed. As long as all men are entitled to the right to vote in this country the SNCC leaders will keep up their efforts to bring the Negro to the polls.

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At present the non-violent movement sees Mississippi as the heart and soul of the white supremacist ideology. When Mississippi goes, so will the rest of the South, they say; and there have been signs recently that this might be true. The Supreme Court on Monday ruled that Mississippi's bus segregation law is so unconstitutional that no three-judge court was necessary to consider it. That the McComb and Jackson Freedom Riders as well as those in Alabama may be acquitted is now just a question of time. Thus the cities of Mississippi may soon be forced to comply with the "law of the land;" when they do, it would seem probable that the rest of the South will recognize that intra- and interstate terminals cannot be segregated.

With increased pressure from such groups as CORE and SNCC, we can expect to see a full investigation of the sovereign state of Mississippi by the American public. Questions must be raised as to why there are no Negroes registered to vote in a county which has almost five thousand Negroes over the age of 21, or why a member of the Mississippi state legislature was not charged, booked, or tried for shooting of a Negro (who happened to be a member of the NAACP).

At the same time, Mississippi might be required to justify the official indifference to crimes against the Negro populace and the collusion of local law enforcement agencies with white supremacist mobsters. When the country recognizes and corrects this situation in Mississippi, then the South will definitely be on its way toward achieving racial equality. ... social revolution will be ... of the

The negro voter registration led by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in and around McComb, Mississippi has just this purpose in mind.

Schools have been organized to teach the Negro the laws and constitution of the State of Mississippi so that he may be able, at least to make an attempt at registration. In most cases registrars

The student non-violent social movement is slow to materialize. It will take the efforts of a new radical young Negro (and his white counterpart), the Supreme Court and the indigent Negro himself to accomplish this revolution; but when it does come, states like Mississippi will become the true example of the American ideal of freedom and justice to all — white and black.

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