

RPW: This is the beginning of the third tape of Robert Moses.

Now, where were we?

RM: Were we talking about the - well, we were talking about the -

RPW: Freedom Day and brinksmanship. The distinction between the fact that social pressures are always exercised by force, and the manipulation of people to create situations of violence, to deliberately exploit the possibility of violence.

RM: And it's a very subtle distinction, I think, in many cases. And certainly here, what - I mean we've - the problem is to bring the Negro people along, that is, to get them - or get some segment of them [ready] to the point where they're ready to participate and know what they're getting involved in. And are themselves ready to move. And then I think you don't - at least that question of manipulating and talking about brinksmanship is something like a general in the army saying or planning that least you don't have that, and then since you yourself are getting involved in the struggle and you run the same risks that they run, then I think that - you know, that eases, at least for myself, that question of - the more philosophical question, the question of exposing people to dangers.

RPW: To take a concrete instance, I've heard it said here in Jackson that when the student demonstration at the college and the shooting took place, here was an occasion where a slight push or a little support you could have had a real big explosion and

then several troops - anyway, it's advanced the cause of integration by ten years.

RM: I don't think so. In the first place - personally, my own philosophy is not geared to capitalizing so much on that kind of outburst in which you get emotional involvement. What's called for then is an emotional release about the specific incident which is in itself a trifling incident and the emotional releases is needed because it's been built up for a series of these incidents. Now, the problem then is to capitalize on that emotional energy, to get a chance to get at those people and explain to them the whole situation that they're involved in and what has to be done to make real change and then to recruit from within that group their people. That's the time you can get people and start them to working. But now the tragedy of that is that we have no access to Jackson State - and this really is something that - well, it's part of the war. If there were more enlightened people on the other side of town we would have access to it. But now -

RPW : The other side of town being what?

RM: White people. Because now what it means is that everything is down - subsided - the students are back. It's going to happen again. It's inevitable for it to happen again. Because there's no transition, and there's no possibility for building up -

RPW: You mean, the random violence burst out of - random violence without program - mere resentment - under the present situation?

RM: Right.

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RPW: Where if this resentment and aspiration could be chanelized by SNIC and similar organizations, it would be constructive. Is that the -

RM: Right. The possibility for it to be constructive and possible maybe to find solutions. You know, now we hit upon these things at Hattiesburg - you know - we would talk about anything and tried it - we didn't know - and that looks like a real breakthrough. I mean, it looks like some way of -

RPW: Explain that, will you please?

RM: Well, everybody has been talking about marshalls. I mean, we've, you know, filed - we've protested time and again to the Department of Justice and we felt troops - you need marshalls, you need law enforcement agencies down here. Mississippi poses a problem that they will not actually enforce any of these laws, and that what's needed is for people to do it. And the whole question on voting - this ties around the problem of creating an atmosphere in which Negroes are not afraid to go downtown. And what happened in Hattiesburg ~~was~~ with the picket line thrown up around it was that - I think that the court house was neutralized. It became instead of enemy territory a white man's territory. The presence of the picket line neutralized the court house and the ministers and the people on the picket line and the police guarding them had the same effect as if they were marshalls. That is, because they were there to keep law and order - the police. So this meant that for the time being it was safe for Negroes to go down,

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and they went down. You see, - and that seems to me constructive way out of an impasse. Now, it's not sure yet - you're not sure what's going to be gained out of that. You're not sure yet whether the white people will settle for this kind of thing, or whether they will arrest everybody on the picket line and - you know - return back to the former situation - put you right back in the past.

RPW: I've got to break it. I'm sorry. I'm going to be late to my luncheon engagement out there with the people there.

This is the end of the conversation with Robert Moses.

END