

# NCC Students And Faculty Visit Harvard Univ. Area

By Charles Jarman and Joyce Perry

What are the problems facing a large urban community? How do the local citizens go about making the necessary improvements? And who are the people behind the improvements?

These were the questions racing through the minds of some 40 students and staff members from NCC as they boarded a bus for Cambridge, Massachusetts, in early August of this year.

They were in a NCC to Harvard visitation which was called an "Experiment in Understanding." The visit to Harvard and surrounding Boston metropolitan areas was designed to promote a better understanding of some of the existing problems of a large urban community, and to encourage participation in the various cultural activities afforded by Harvard and the surrounding areas.

The group was accommodated by both White and Negro students of Harvard and individuals of local civic-interest group groups.

As a northern city, Boston was not totally unique with her civic problems. The most acute problems presented to the group were housing discrimination, de facto segregation of public schools and unfair employment practices. In order to get a better insight on these problems the group met with local civic organizations spearheading the civil rights movement.

The local chapters of CORE, NAACP and the Boston Action Group, along with the Northern Student Movement—a group of students mostly from Harvard, Radcliffe and Boston University—provided an excellent atmosphere for exchanging views on the problems of the South as compared to those of the North.

Each of the organizations worked separately on these major problem areas; however,

there were channels for inter-group coordination between the leaders for the purpose of analyzing progress reports.

At the time we arrived, CORE was engaged in the housing problem of the Roxbury area, a predominant Negro section of the metropolitan area. It is in this area that most of the Negroes lived. Many of the apartments are delapidated and overcrowded, especially in the low rent section.

This sordid community environment appears to be, basically, a product of Negro migrants seeking low income dwellings. Negroes are relegated to this residential section because of racial discrimination in housing. For the Negroes who had made efforts to move to a more desirable community and were discriminated against by realtors or proprietors, CORE became involved. This is indeed a northern ghetto.

CORE's key instrument for determining discrimination was through the constant use of white and Negro test groups. When a Negro member of the test group was refused a house, and the same house was later offered for lease to a white member of the test group, CORE would investigate the discrimination and present the case to the Boston Housing Authorities.

The NAACP was engaged in a legal struggle with the school committee and city officials concerning de facto segregation in public schools. According to the NAACP officials these schools were not of the same quality as the predominant white schools.

On the Boston School System there are no Negro principals and the number of Negro teachers are in the minority in the predominant Negro schools. Tom Atkins, Boston's Executive Secretary of NAACP pointed out that the Negro pupil's complete school without being exposed to the history of the Negro heri-



NCC STUDENTS VISITING HARVARD UNIVERSITY, discuss class schedules while climbing steps of Harvard University library. Bernell Jones, left; Joyce Perry, center; and Kelly Compton, right.

tage.

In response to this inexperience to the history of the Negroes, a small group of Boston citizens are sponsoring a "Freedom School." This is one of the most enlightening community projects.

The school is designated to strengthen the Negro as an individual and as citizens. Activities carried on here include voter education, principals of non-violence, history of the Negro and the tactics involved in selective buying.

Teachers for the "Freedom School" are volunteer workers,

usually college students, or guest speakers, working under the direction of Noel Day, director of St. Marks Social Center, and Rev. James Breeden, director of "Freedom School." Many of the teachers buy books and other supplies with their own money.

The Boston Action Group is organized for direct action against job discrimination. It was started by a group of college students (mostly white) who felt that many companies discriminated against Negroes and would not hire them unless pressured. These students felt

that selective buying was the main pressure that could hurt a business.

With this idea in mind the students initiated a "selective patronage" and picketing movement against one of the world's largest bakeries, The Wonder Bread Company. Through the ministers, newspapers and leaflets, news of the selective patronage spread throughout the city of Boston. The people stopped buying the companies products; even store owners cancelled orders with the company. The campaign was successful, and after several months the company began to hire Negroes as truck drivers, salesmen, clerks and production workers. Negroes had never been employed for any of these jobs before.

Certainly the problems of a large community are larger in scope that we observed. The list of needed community improvements, especially race relations in Boston and the surrounding areas, could go on and on and—But the progress in these Northern cities gave some 40 southerners something to admire about northern city leaders and citizens engaged in community (See NCC-HARVARD, page 6)

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