

## BOTH RACES JOIN HANDS

# Center Aids Negro Youths Where Riot Once Raged

By BILL WINN

"Please don't," the little boy cried. "I ain't done nothing. I ain't done nothing."

An Atlanta policeman shoved him back into the paddy wagon and slammed the door.

"Yes you did," said the policeman. "I saw you throw the bottle. Get back in there."

The boy began to cry in earnest. Over the screams of the mob of angry Negroes you could hear him sobbing: "I didn't do it. I didn't do nothing. Let me out. Let me out."

He was still shouting when the paddy wagon drove away.

**THAT HAPPENED** last September on the last night of three consecutive days of rioting on Boulevard Avenue in Atlanta. The boy, who looked to be about 10 years old, was just one of

more than 90 Negroes arrested during the riots.

For anyone who was there to see it, the spectacle of the jeering, screaming mob that surged up and down the littered street



was an experience not easily forgotten.

The choking, acrid smell of tear gas; the sight of a police paddy wagon, struck by a Molotov cocktail, engulfed in flames; and the shouts of "Get the roaches out!" stay with anyone for a long time.

But more than anything else, reporters who were there remarked on the number of young people, many of them scarcely in their teens, who were follow-

ing their elders — lashing out at symbols of white supremacy.

They called police "roaches" and more than one youngster got a personal introduction to Atlanta's finest during those three days.

Some arrested during the riots were fined, some were bound over to the Fulton County Grand Jury and some had their cases dismissed.

**PERHAPS THAT** little Negro boy, because he was so young, was released back to his parents. Perhaps, too, he understands the futility of his gesture — throwing a pop bottle at a symbol of hate.

With luck, a lot of luck, he just might find his way back to school and into an area that will

Turn to Page 14, Column 5

# CENTER AIDS YOUTH

Continued from Page 1

allow him to build a meaningful life for himself.

But in case he hasn't, a group of Atlanta ministers, whites and Negroes, have joined hands to give the little boy, and many others like him, a boost in the right direction.

The Atlanta Youth Development Recreation Center is located on Parkway Drive NE, a few blocks from the center of last summer's rioting.

It's housed in a dilapidated old building that is as run down as most of the structures in the neighborhood.

Inside, there is a ping pong table, a rickety basketball goal and a pool table. A few benches line one wall. That's about it, except for the Negro youths themselves.

**THEY ARE** gathered in groups. Some are playing cards. Two girls play ping pong. A pick-up game of half-court basketball is underway. The basket is so shaky it threatens to collapse every time the ball slams against the boards.

More young people are watch-

ing. The pool table draws a big crowd of onlookers.

Milton Ivey, a young Negro, has the job of full-time recreation director for the center. Right now, the recreation he directs is limited.

"It's going to get better though," he says. "We are going to start education courses right away. Of course, we need money badly."

Atlanta Youth Development, Inc. is responsible for the center. AYD is really just a formal name for a group of concerned ministers who banded together and managed to raise a little cash to rent the warehouse.

**ORIGINALLY**, the ministers were all Negroes, but they soon joined hands with other white ministers and a number of interested Atlanta citizens who find it impossible to forget the three days of rioting.

Many of the young Negroes who have flocked to the center, opened this week, have police records. Many are school dropouts. Some are on probation for robbery and other crimes.

"We've got to help these kids start thinking about their own betterment," says Rev. J. D. Grier, a Negro civic leader who has long showed concern for the children in the Boulevard area.

"We have to get them to think about themselves," he said.

Rev. Grier said the center does not begin to meet the needs of the young people, but, he adds, it is a step in the right direction.

"**WHAT WE** need most of all now for the recreation center is equipment," he said.

AYD is also low on funds. The ministers hope they can get some federal assistance in the near future. Mr. Ivey, the

recreation director, is an employe of Economic Opportunity Atlanta, which supplies several volunteer workers to get the program off the ground.

"It's going to take a lot of work," said Mr. Ivey, a slim man who doesn't look much like a recreation director. "I know it doesn't look like much now, but we would rather have those kids in here than out there on the street."

Maybe the little Negro boy who saw the paddy wagon door slammed in his face on a night last September will find a new door at the center.

People who watched those riots last summer like to think he will.