

Southern Exposure

\$4.50

Stayed On Freedom



Southern Exposure

Volume IX, Number 1

Spring, 1981

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Editors: Maxine Alexander, Ben Fewel, Bob Hall, Chris Mayfield, Marc Miller, Jim Overton, Joe Pfister, Linda Rocawich, Liz Wheaton, Kathleen Zobel.

Design: Frank Holyfield

Composition: Southern Types

Special Thanks: Wekesa Madzimoyo, Verdrey Madzimoyo, Byron Sterling and the Perkins Library staff at Duke University, Africa News, Elaine Tomlin and the SCLC staff, Voter Education Project, Dr. Bernice Reagon and the Smithsonian Institution Program in Black American Culture, Moorland Spingarn Research Center at Howard University, Anne Braden and the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic & Social Justice, Jack O'Dell, Barbara Taylor, Leah Wise, Faye Bellamy, Eric Tate, Peter Wood, Peter Cunningham, Judy Claude, John Hampton, Gloria Furmin, Ron Chisom, Hulbert James, Page McCullough, Howard Chapman and Black Star, Delany Wilson, Debbie Buford, Chris Nichols, Helaine Becker, Frances Murchison, Lawrence Guyot, Tom Dent, Justine Rector, Eileen Hanson, Patricia Mackay, Ken Lawrence, *Freedomways*, New World Foundation, Norman Foundation, Field Foundation,

Southern Exposure® is published quarterly by the Institute for Southern Studies. Frequency of publication and subscription rates are in transition from 4 issues per year @ \$10 (\$12 for libraries and institutions) to 6 issues per year @ \$16 (\$20 for libraries and institutions). All new subscriptions are for six issues at the \$16/\$20 rate, but we will send four issues for \$10 through Volume IX (1981). Address all editorial and subscription correspondence to: *Southern Exposure*, P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702. Second class postage is paid at Durham, NC 27702. Copyright © Institute for Southern Studies, 604 W. Chapel Hill St., Durham, NC 27701. ISSN: 0146-809X. Post Office Publication Number 053470.

Cover Photography: Flip Schulke/Black Star

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Charles Moore/Black Star

Woke up this morn- ing with my mind (my mind it was)
 stayed — on free- dom, (oh well I) woke up this morn - ing with my
 mind — stayed — on free - dom, (Oh well I)
 woke up this morn - ing with my mind (my mind it was)
 stayed — on free - dom, Hal - le - lu, hal - le - lu, hal - le -
 lu, hal - le - lu, hal - le - u — — — jah! —

Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on freedom

*Ain't no harm to keep your mind stayed on freedom,
 Ain't no harm to keep your mind stayed on freedom,
 Ain't no harm to keep your mind stayed on freedom,
 Hallelu, Hallelu, hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah!*

*Walkin and talkin with my mind stayed on freedom
 Singin and prayin with my mind stayed on freedom*

The freedom struggles sparked by the Montgomery Bus Boycott have touched and influenced more Americans than any other event in this century. “Stayed on Freedom” shares the stories of what happens when you get involved in the Movement: you wake up in the morning with your mind on freedom, you walk and talk with your mind on freedom, your whole life is dedicated to building a new order based on joy and fellowship, free of racism and exploitation.

Since the first Africans arrived in America in chains, the liberation movement has always been composed of people whose minds are stayed on freedom. At its core, the force of the Freedom Movement of the 1950s and '60s emerged from people, huge numbers of people marching with humility and pride along the same path, united by a common vision of humanity, justice and people's power. Music was the language of the Movement, the preacher its mouthpiece, students and mothers its shocktroops, the Bible and Consti-

tution its foundation, the kinship of all people its power and authority. In a naive yet profound belief in the capacity of Americans to rise above their historical handicaps, the Freedom Movement made visible the raw division between black and white societies, and with compelling force, it made the country choose between snarling dogs and singing marchers.

Today, the gains of the most recent phase of our Movement — the last 25 years — are in jeopardy. Part of the problem comes from our failure to preserve the political and moral force of the Movement's unity while expanding our vision to include struggles for full employment, nationalized health protection, public ownership of primary areas of the economy (including energy and housing) and other structural changes in our political economy. Part of the problem results because those who would subvert social justice — including old adversaries like Strom Thurmond and Ronald Reagan — have seized the initiative and now plan an aggressive attack on everything from the Voting Rights Act to the Food Stamp program.

We are now called upon today to defend freedom and confront savagery in whatever new forms it takes; we must not take one step backwards, but must build on the strengths and insights of the Freedom Movement with a more tough-minded analysis and more far-reaching goals. Toward that

end, this book offers profiles of struggle, self-criticism and guideposts for our future work. We've aimed it especially at the many would-be freedom fighters who are looking for symbols of courage and who are anxious to learn from those who battled against the police-state conditions that existed in the South in the 1950s. Reading these pages, we hope that our youth will become inspired and will walk in the shoes of Lucretia Collins, E.D. Nixon, Gwen Patton, James Orange, Anne Braden, Ella Baker, Rosa Parks, John Lewis, Bob Zellner, Charlie Cobb and the thousands whose Movement experiences remain unrecorded here or anywhere. Having their stories told is particularly important now that perceptions of our Freedom Movement are distorted by the entertainment-oriented media, which limits our history to a string of dramatic court decisions or bold actions by a single leader.

"Stayed on Freedom," like all products of the Movement, does not result from the effort of a small group of people working in an isolated office. We have been guided throughout by the pioneering work of *Freedomways*, a journal that celebrates its twentieth anniversary in 1981, and we pay special tribute to its editor, Esther Jackson, who has deep roots in our Southern struggle. We have also drawn from the tradition of music in the Movement. Not only does a song give us our title, but it also inspires us daily. We give thanks to Guy Carawan and Candie Carawan, true brother and sister of our Movement, for their book of

songs, *We Shall Overcome*, from which we have taken the music in this book.

One caution: these personal stories, photos and songs are obviously not a complete history of our Movement, much less of the past 25 years. We have been forced to include only a few of the countless theatres of the Movement — in the South, in the nation, in the world. In addition, we have passed over the struggle to desegregate the nation's schools, which was the focus of an earlier issue of *Southern Exposure*, "Just Schools." We see "Stayed on Freedom" as but one in a series of *Southern Exposures* which put the Movement at center stage. We intend to cover both the past and present activities of the Movement in future issues, and encourage you to send us your favorite Movement photographs, those diaries and letters collecting dust, the poems and essays that bring a special meaning when you submerge yourself in Movement activism.

Lastly, thanks for subscribing, purchasing or borrowing "Stayed on Freedom." We at *Southern Exposure* hope that this book will open up a significant period in this country's history — the *most significant* for those of us who came of age during it — and will strengthen each reader in making his or her contribution to the Movement today.

— Pat Bryant





We became

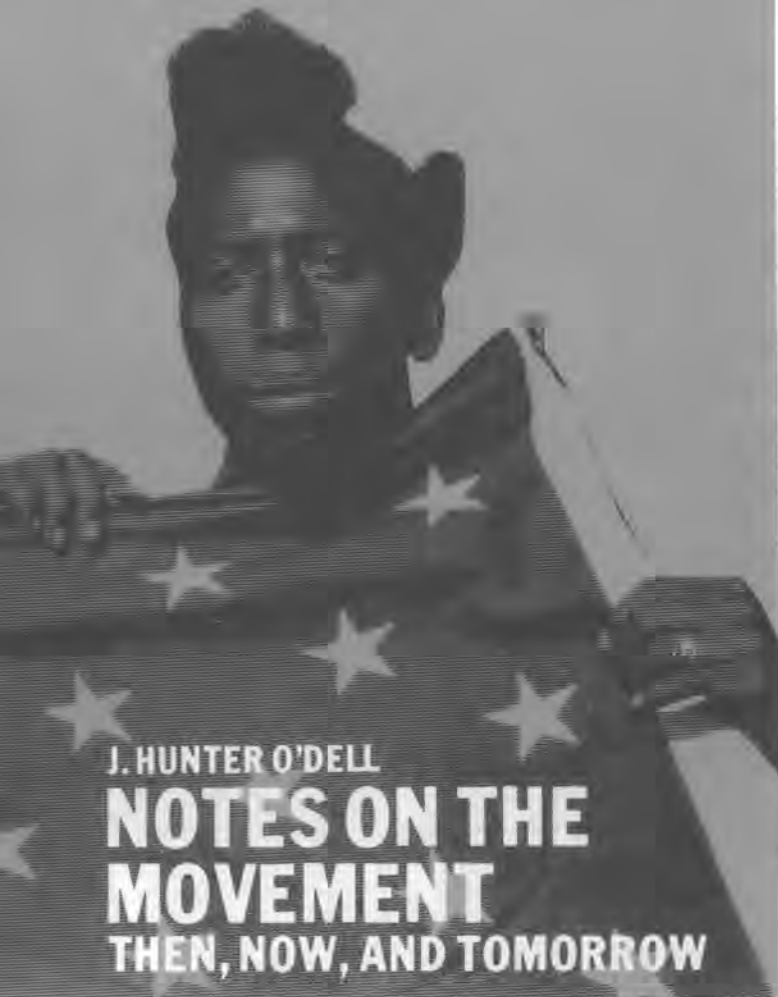


visible, our image was enlarged...

As a singer and activist in the Albany Movement, I sang and heard the freedom songs and saw them pull together sections of the black community at times when other means of communication were ineffective. It was the first time that I knew the power of song to be an instrument for the articulation of our community concerns. In Dawson, Georgia, county seat of “Terrible Terrell,” where blacks were 75 percent of the population, I sat in a church and felt the chill that ran through a small gathering of blacks when the sheriff and his deputies walked in. They stood at the door, making sure everybody knew they were there. Then a song began. And the song made sure that the sheriff and his deputies knew we were there. We became visible, our image was enlarged, when the sounds of the freedom songs filled all the space in the church.

— *Bernice Johnson Reagon*

From the catalogue accompanying the three-volume set, *Voices of the Civil-Rights Movement*, produced by and available from the Smithsonian Institution Program in Black American Culture.



J. HUNTER O'DELL
**NOTES ON THE
MOVEMENT**
THEN, NOW, AND TOMORROW

Bob Clare

The most significant feature of any movement that is effecting profound change in society is the role it plays in creating a dual authority in the country. It is the authority of the movement as the people's response to the policies of the established authority which gives the movement the power to ultimately effect a democratic transformation of society.

Beginning with the events of Montgomery in 1955, when the Afro-American community of 50,000 citizens stood as one in a bus boycott, and extending to 1969 with the Vietnam Moratorium, in which an estimated four million people participated, our Movement created a dual authority in the country. There was on the one hand the established authority: the citadels of institutional racism, the masters of war, the apparatus of government — state, local and federal — and those chosen to do the dirty work of suppressing our Movement in defense of the status quo. This established authority acted out a way of life that was rooted in custom and tradition, and dictated by class interests.

The other center of authority was the Civil Rights-Anti-War Movement which represented a continuum of protest activity during the period. This authority, the Movement, represented the people's alternative to the power of institutional racism and colonialist war. The Movement had at its disposal such resources as dedicated organizers who educated and mobilized the aggrieved people; charismatic, grass-roots leadership that articulated the goals and the vision that inspired action; performing artists who gave of their time and talent; church choirs, benefit concerts, mass meetings, and literature designed to instruct and enlighten as

well as reflect the experiences of the Movement. All of this was held together by an ethos of camaraderie developed in struggle.

The Movement was a proliferation of centers busy with community activists planning strategy, recruiting volunteers, raising bail for those arrested for exercising their constitutional right to protest injustices; above all, people organized and aroused to action. In this many-sided collective activity, untold numbers of people made personal decisions on how much they would allow the Movement's authority to affect their everyday lives. The decisions were varied: whether to attend a meeting, participate in a march, or register to vote; whether to use vacation time, or drop out of school, to do full-time organizing; whether to give the family car to the Movement or put up property as bail bond. Some ministers cut down on their church work in order to do what they perceived in a new light as the work of the church. Teachers volunteered to run "freedom schools," and a few lawyers donated their services to defend participants in the Movement or to help redefine the meaning of law-and-order in the South.

In the years between Montgomery and the Vietnam Moratorium, the authority of the people's Movement in this country was expressed in thousands of individual actions and hundreds of local demonstrations in cities across the land where citizens singled out targets for disciplined, collective action. The authority of this Movement sprang from the best traditions of the Negro church, organized labor and populist radicalism, and its spirit was reflected and continually revived in the musical themes of that period: "This Little Light of Mine," "All We Are Saying Is Give Peace A Chance," "We Shall Not Be Moved," and the most famous, "We Shall Overcome."

Obviously, the struggle for civil rights did not begin with the mass protests of the 1950s, but the physical involvement of thousands of Afro-Americans and whites in the South and North transformed the struggle into a movement whose authority challenged the basis of the established order's value system with a new vision of freedom, brotherhood and democracy. It was this spirit and commitment to a new set of goals and values that enabled our Movement to sustain the wounds inflicted upon peaceful demonstrators in Birmingham and Selma, the Democratic National Convention in Chicago and the Poor People's encampment in Washington, DC.

From an international perspective, the mass movement of the 1950s and '60s created a moral and political crisis for the rulers of the U.S. who at the time were immodestly proclaiming themselves the "leadership of the Free World." One would have had to look very hard to find a country whose citizens were so systematically denied the elementary right to use a public park or go into a restaurant for a meal or use the regular elevator or attend a public tax-supported college. In the United States, Afro-Americans were denied every one of these rights and more. By forcing an end to such embarrassingly backward practices, the Movement created the conditions whereby the U.S. and its leadership partially closed the gap in relation to the rest of the modern world.

Similarly, through the sacrifice of the Movement, through the emancipation of the mind and spirit of the South's people, the Southern region of the United States rejoined the nation and entered fully into the twentieth century. Segregation had clouded the white Southerners'

perception of reality and held them back from acting on what they did perceive clearly. The Civil Rights Movement, like all mass movements for democracy, was a great teacher of civilized values, and in the wake of the removal of segregation, the common interest of the white and black working population is beginning to surface, as exemplified by union organizing efforts in the region.

Given its particular focus, the Civil Rights Movement achieved its stated objectives by first abolishing law-enforced segregation and ending disfranchisement of the black population in the South. Having achieved these objectives, the movement for civil rights was transformed into a movement to complete the tasks of the Second Reconstruction by winning greater representation for the black population in government. When the civil-rights legislation in 1964-65 became law, there were barely 300 black elected officials in the country. Today, there are almost 5,000 — about half of them in the South. When the civil-rights legislation of 1964-65 was passed, there were a million-and-a-half black voters in the South. Today there are nearly three million. It is important to understand that this transformation from mass protest to a focus on legislative power was a logical development, since our experience had taught us that having a greater voice in the institutions of government is the only way to protect the rights we have won and make secure their enforcement.

It is equally important to recognize that the civil-rights laws of the 1960s were passed after the fact. They did not create change; rather the struggle for expanded democracy, participated in by tens of thousands of our fellow citizens, produced a body of legislation which confirmed the effectiveness of that struggle. The laws were a crystallized form of expressing the new reality that people would no longer

abide by the rules and mores of racial segregation. Segregation was in fact abolished by the power of the Civil Rights Movement. A movement, whether of reform or revolution, always struggles for a legislative manifestation of its victory because that establishes a new code of conduct in relation to the old order of things. It confirms that change has been accepted and that the particular struggle for democracy has been victorious.

Once the victory is formalized, the movement must regroup around the definition of the next stage of mass democracy and move on to its fulfillment. The opposition will inevitably attempt to trap the movement into preoccupying itself with implementing victories that have been codified into law. Indeed, the law is often written in such a way as to encourage this entrapment. And since the Movement's activists are often experiencing a degree of exhaustion, the tendency to focus on emphasizing that which has been won is even stronger because it is a form of reprieve.

The decade of the 1970s has found the Movement caught up in just such an eddy in which motion is devoid of clear direction; we have become preoccupied by the rituals of the technician-intelligentsia and have shifted responsibility for social change to them, substituting their busy-ness for mass-movement organizing. Yet only the latter can provide the driving force for the achievement of greater democracy. The tendency has become to make Title III, VI or IX of this or that act the focus of our attention along with the writing of proposals to foundations or government agencies. These activities have been projected as "more sophisticated" ways of achieving our objectives. This is the New Thing;

Heading back home after the 1963 March on Washington. 250,000 attended the largest demonstration in U.S. history up to that time.

Wide World Photos





Pat Bryant

1980 national march in Laurel, Miss., in support of poultry workers.

and the complexities of life and the difficulty of identifying programatically what we need to focus on have tended to give credence to this new style.

It is inevitable and good that we have learned — for example — how to hold press conferences, for we all recognize that technologically this is a media age. But it was disastrous for us to rely primarily upon these corporate forms of mass communication to get our message and analysis out to the public. Once that dependence becomes a matter of style, it is too easy to fall into the practice of tailoring activity to fit what the media might pick up. Such dependence encourages competition among the leaders themselves since the new value system becomes who gets the most media attention. In the end, it means a new kind of addiction to media rather than being in charge of our own agenda and relying upon mass support as our guarantee that ultimately the news-covering apparatus must give recognition to our authority.

The mass meetings held every Monday night, week after week, in dozens of Southern communities and every Saturday morning in Northern cities during the early 1960s were main forms of communication, mass education and mass mobilization. This was the strength of the Movement: not having fallen into reliance upon the monopoly-controlled media to report its activities. Through these regular mass meetings and the mobilization that followed, the direct participation of the community in the struggle to secure our objectives was sustained. Thus a direct line of accountability was maintained between the leaders at all levels and the broad base of support among the people. Another important dimension of this relationship was that the people themselves financed such a movement, lessening the dependence on the “generosity” of other sources of revenue. The power of any movement for democracy is always dependent on such reciprocal relations between the mass of people and their leadership.

The decade of the 1970s has been a hard teacher for Afro-American leaders, and the sense of apprehension and doubt about the possibilities of a better life under this economy has dramatically increased. Yet the remedies traditional civil-rights organizations are clinging to and placing

hope in are at best potentially relief measures rather than solutions. Such measures as economic set-asides from the federal budget to assist black businesses are seen as an aid to economic development; more affirmative action, vigorously enforced in both the public and private sector, and more support to black colleges are of course all laudable relief measures that deserve support. However such programs suggest that we are suffering from a parochial approach to solving the problems of the Afro-American community. These problems are connected to and are an exaggerated expression of a deeper malady. The United States is a society currently in the throes of a long-term economic crisis whose process of ruination is a protracted one. Notwithstanding the appearance of relative prosperity among a large section of the employed population, the features of stagnation and dislocation in our capitalist economy are deep and of long duration. The time in history in which we live, and the general crisis and regressive trends in our country, call us to move boldly on to the next stage of struggle for mass democracy.

The Civil Rights Movement of the '50s and '60s was always an anti-racist revolt within the general struggle to preserve constitutional rights and block the timetable of fascism in our country; the latter is the natural tendency of the ruling corporate elite when their system is in the kind of crisis it is today. Yet this mass-movement revolt against racism in all its forms was not an anti-capitalist revolt, nor was anti-capitalist ideology at any time a very significant influence. However, the Civil Rights Movement under the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr., evolved the strategic concept of mobilizing the poorest among the working class in a campaign to dramatize the issue of widespread poverty in the “richest country in the world.” At that point, the Movement began to step across the threshold of struggle for merely *formal* equality into an era of struggle for *substantial* equality. This jump inevitably meant a confrontation with the economic and ethical deficiencies of the free enterprise system itself. The very essence of the

Poor People's Campaign was to confront the nature of the system that produces poverty for the millions as a natural accompaniment to making the super-rich more extravagantly wealthy. On the eve of that campaign, Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis as he responded to the call for help from sanitation workers seeking recognition for their union and their right to collective bargaining.

The voices of the New Right are frequently heard today proclaiming that "the movements of the '60s went too far." In fact, our social protest movement didn't go far enough in the depth of its criticism and public education concerning the nature of American institutions. Nor could it have gone further, for once the Civil Rights Movement correctly shifted its focus to the poverty conditions of millions of our fellow citizens and to the immoral, racist war in Vietnam, the Movement became the target of a counter-offensive spearheaded by the government. Many of the details of this sinister counterrevolutionary offensive were officially documented by the Senate Select Committee headed by Senator Frank Church and are now public knowledge. So we need not elaborate here on COINTELPRO, political assassination and other forms this took. What must be underscored, however, is that the design was to bring to a halt the advances and the momentum of the movements of the '60s; to get the Movement out of the streets and therefore out of public view and out of public consciousness; to break up the alliances that were being built with organized labor, women, Latinos and Native Americans and otherwise liquidate the Movement. That was the point. This was a more sophisticated attack than those which occurred during the crude illegalities of the early McCarthy era, but the content and purpose were the same. The crowning achievement of this counterrevolutionary offensive was the election of Richard Nixon to the presidency of the United States, and as a consequence, this marked the beginning of the nadir of this historical phase of the Civil Rights Movement.

The Movement is still alive, yet its life today is being consumed fighting defensive battles. The defense of affirmative action programs in education and employment; the defense against retrenchment by some states whose legislatures are trying to rescind their decision to endorse the

Equal Rights Amendment; the defense of innocents in prison like the Wilmington Ten and the Wounded Knee defendants are among such examples. No one can deny that defensive battles have to be fought from time to time and fought effectively so that victories are won. Yet the time-tested wisdom which holds that the best defense is an offensive movement is an important concept for us to renew in practice today.

Social change and real progress always require that a movement keep the offensive in pursuit of clearly defined goals. That is how our Movement abolished segregation in public accommodations; it launched a mass offensive against this form of institutional racism. Defensive battles are selectively taken up and victories won *when they are shown to be related to the offensive* our Movement is developing. Otherwise, we can be kept busy by the opposition with defensive battles, but we will not be going anywhere. In such a busy-ness situation, the vision of our goal is lost and soon the movement fragments.

To put our Movement on the offensive again, we must make the transition from a primary emphasis on formal civil rights to an emphasis on achieving the goal of substantive civil equality. Such a movement will shift from a focus on the formal recognition of our rights to the implementation of actual equality in the conditions of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness all of us aspire to share. It will provide our country with a national purpose and goals consistent with human progress. It will be good for the spiritual and material well-being of U.S. society, and as a majority of the population embraces and gets involved in this national effort, our country will again "catch up" with the global movement for human rights that daily exposes the backwardness and contradictions of our present system. Consider these fundamental structural inequities that remain to be addressed by our Movement in its new stage, because they are left unsolved even with the formal reality of legislatively-protected civil rights:

Income. Over the last 30 years the median family income among Afro-Americans has been 40-45 percent less than the

1965: Selma-to-Montgomery march begins with police attack.



median family income among whites (except for 1969 when it was 39 percent less). If black families received the same fraction of total income as their 12 percent of the total population, their cash receipts would have been \$75 billion more than what they actually received in 1980. The picture of stagnation and deprivation represented by these figures unmasks the deceit behind the official propaganda about the rise of the black middle class. The number of middle-income black Americans has indeed risen; but so has the number of permanently unemployed and underemployed black workers whose jobs have been eliminated by technology or the flight of capital investment abroad. Growth without development is increasingly a characteristic of this political economy, and the growth of the middle-income stratum of Afro-Americans is being used to conceal the fact that the community as a whole is being de-developed. In any year during the entire decade of the '70s, a minimum of two million black workers were unemployed; some estimates put the figure as high as three million.

Housing. A decade ago, our Movement was demanding equal access to housing available for rent or sale without discrimination. Today, the national supply of moderately priced housing is totally inadequate to meet the needs of the average-income family. This shortage is not the result of our lack of access to available housing; rather it is an institutional problem involving the level of monopoly control exercised by the banks and lending agencies over the housing market. We have won an end to racial discrimination in housing, but the housing situation is generally worse today for working and middle-class people than when the Open Housing Act was passed by Congress after Dr. King's assassination. That act did not address the institutional problem of housing in America; in our new Movement, the role of the banks, and their dominant influence on the ownership of homes, farms and land, must be the focus of our actions.

Health. It is well known that the United States is the only industrially developed country, other than South Africa, that has no government-financed system of national health care, either through national health insurance or the more efficient and less costly form, a nationalized health service. To note but one example of the backwardness of our current health system, the United States, with a two-trillion-dollar Gross National Product, ranks seventeenth in infant mortality; that means sixteen other countries do a better job of saving children's lives than we do. A health-care system based on private profit is not only inefficient and elitist; it fundamentally perpetuates sickness by surviving off the catastrophic potential of an individual's disease. A mass movement demanding equal and full health care treatment for all people undercuts the very basis of the current private doctor-patient system that dominates U.S. health policy.

Energy. The private corporate ownership of a natural resource — oil, gas, coal — is another contradiction that stands in the way of solving national problems in the public interest. If there is indeed an energy crisis, then we must set up the rational conditions for the public use of oil, gas and coal in a rational way. Only public ownership — i.e., public control over the manufacture, distribution and sale of energy — allows for the rationally planned conservation and use of these natural resources. The regulatory agency as a substitute for public ownership or nationalization is, by design, inadequate. For example, the Federal Power Commission tried to regulate the price of natural gas in interstate

commerce. But since the natural gas is owned by the corporate Seven Sisters, they simply refused to sell it interstate until they could get the price they demanded. So gas shortages are not real, but contrived by those manipulating the market to maximize their corporate profits. If we are serious about dealing with the energy crisis, there is no reason for us to leave the nation's energy resources in the hands of Exxon, Texaco, Continental Oil, Con Edison and other parasitic monopolies. If the public does not control the sources of energy, we cannot control the solution of the energy crisis. Thus, public ownership of public resources is the prerequisite for a solution to this national problem.

Inflation and Militarism. A major ideological hurdle is being overcome by traditional civil-rights organizations as they increasingly insist, and correctly so, that putting people to work in a full-employment economy is *not* inflationary. Yet most civil-rights organizations have still not articulated, through their leadership, the position that the military budget is the chief cause of inflation. The question of inflation versus unemployment will continue to be a nagging, tortuous reality because the U.S. economy is sick. It is up to our Movement to popularize the common root of both problems in the use of public resources for military hardware. Inflation is fueled by the wasteful expenditure of government funds for nonproductive, over-priced goods which are continually being destroyed or declared obsolete. Further, for every 1,000 jobs created by investment in military production, the same amount of money would create 1,200 jobs if invested in socially useful sectors of the economy, such as housing, schools, day-care centers and the like. Consequently, spending for the military aggravates unemployment instead of helping solve the problem. It is in the highest national interest, therefore, that the arms race and the military budget be made less attractive to those corporations and politicians whose survival depends upon war and the preparation of war. The world, too, would breathe a sigh of relief if we, the people of the United States, demanded an end to the arms race and the danger of nuclear war. A full-employment economy of socially useful peacetime work for all is the real guarantee of our national security, in contrast to the rampant parasitic militarism which escalates the arms race and pushes the world community toward nuclear annihilation.

A national movement centered on these ideas will require for its achievement the kind of in-depth renovation of the main economic and political institutions that our nation has not seen since the abolition of slave labor more than a century ago. The winning of substantial equality as the national goal of a mass movement will obviously be a protracted, drawn-out battle. It is important in this context to remind ourselves of another lesson we have learned from previous movements of Afro-Americans, women, labor, Hispanics and Native Americans: our journey will inevitably be slowed by two historical tendencies in the official policy of the government and the economic order it serves.

The first tendency is simply delay: to postpone, drag out indefinitely, as long as possible, the recognition of formal equality or equal rights. Then, when this right is formally conceded, to let that stand as the ultimate concession. Under this tendency it took the women's movement 75 years to get a constitutional amendment (1920) formally acknowledging their right to the vote — a right which didn't fully materialize until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1965, when black women could finally vote in the South.



Bob Clare

The second historical tendency involves drawing the line against further gains by reintroducing regressive trends in the life of society. The re-emergence of the Ku Klux Klan, the propaganda about “reverse discrimination” and the revival of the old theories of white supremacy dressed in the new academic regalia of “socio-biology” are current examples. The airwaves are also reverberating, as in the past, with messages from the false prophets of the white Christian church in the form of an evangelical crusade — this one called the Moral Majority. Associating love of one’s country with love of the free-enterprise system and support for increasing the parasitic military budget, these evangelist preachers are mobilizing the conservative wing of the Christian church in hopes of drowning out the social gospel of liberation with which the black church in the South has been so prominently identified. In the tradition of all obscurantist movements throughout history, the Moral Majority is designed to pollute the public minds with impressions that create a subservient mass base in support of ultra-conservative public policy.

Nevertheless, our protracted struggle for human equality will not take as long as the 300-year struggle for civil rights because the world situation is more favorable today than ever before. The political map is being changed on a global scale by the mass movement of ordinary people who are wiping away the legacy of racism, colonialism and national oppression. Their mass movement is an irreversible force affirming the “somebody-ness” of every member of the human race. The idea of peace, justice and socially useful work for all is no longer an abstraction. Hundreds of millions of people have made this ideal a flesh-and-blood reality as they reorder the economic and political life of their societies.

It is against the backdrop of this ascendant humanism in our age that we, citizens of the United States, must measure the level of civilization we have achieved as a society and the tasks ahead of us as a movement for civil equality. Our

Dallas, Texas, November 3, 1979.

success in confronting institutional racism in America is inescapably measured by the grim realities of continued U.S. support for such policies as apartheid in South Africa and torture in Central America. As the martyred patriot, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said in his last speech, “All we are saying to America is, ‘Be true to what you have said on paper.’” Consistent with this commitment to fulfill the ideals of the Declaration of Independence, our Movement’s success will ultimately mean the regeneration of the United States as a civilization and its transition to higher forms of democracy. That vision gives our Movement the authority it must have to overcome the authority of the old order.

The self-interest held in common by Afro-Americans, women, organized labor, Hispanic-Americans and Native American Indians is the foundation for building a new political life in the United States today. Yet in a period in which selfish individualism is encouraged as a substitute for involvement in collective effort, we should guard against the tendency to see “self-interest” in the narrowest meaning of the term. “Be concerned about your brother,” Dr. King said to the people of Memphis in his last speech. “You may not be on strike, but we go up together or we go down together.” That is the spirit of unity and unselfish commitment which has guided every movement that has succeeded in winning substantial victories. And that is the spirit, affirming a global level of mutual respect and common humanity, which will provide the motive force for the authority of our new mass movement. □

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MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT

On Friday, December 2, 1955, readers of the *Montgomery Advertiser* who paid close attention to the local crime stories saw this item as they sipped their morning coffee:

NEGRO JAILED HERE FOR "OVERLOOKING" BUS SEGREGATION

A Montgomery Negro woman was arrested by city police last night for ignoring a bus driver who directed her to sit in the rear of the bus.

The woman, Rosa Parks, 634 Cleveland Ave., was later released under \$100 bond.

Bus operator J.F. Blake, 27 N. Lewis St., in notifying police, said a Negro woman sitting in the section reserved for whites refused to move to the Negro section.

When officers F.B. May and D.W. Mixon arrived where the bus was halted on Montgomery Street, they confirmed the driver's report.

Blake signed the warrant for her arrest under a section of the city code that gives police powers to bus drivers in the enforcement of segregation aboard the buses.

Two days later a boldly displayed box appeared on the front page of the *Advertiser*, its headline announcing: "Negro Groups Ready Boycott of City Lines." Joe Azbell, then the paper's city editor, wrote in the first paragraph of the article that a "top-secret meeting of Negro leaders" had been called for Monday evening at the Holt Street Baptist Church. The rest of the article reprinted almost the entire text of a leaflet being distributed by black leaders calling for a one-day boycott of the bus lines.

The "top-secret meeting" mentioned in Azbell's article became a mass meeting that launched not only the Montgomery bus boycott, but also the modern Civil Rights Movement and the career of Martin Luther King, Jr., as one of its principal spokespeople.

E.D. Nixon, the boycott's organizer, was a protege of the late A. Philip Randolph and a leader in the Alabama section of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters that Randolph founded. He was a consistent, often solitary, voice against the oppression of blacks in his home state of Alabama and his native Montgomery. Nixon knew the arrested woman well. Rosa

Parks had been secretary of the NAACP's Montgomery chapter during some of the many years he served as its president. She was, he says, a "hard-working, God-fearing and respectable lady in the community," and he knew he could organize a movement of support in response to her arrest. Nixon posted a property bond to secure her release from jail pending trial and asked attorney Clifford Durr to represent her.

There was a young minister in town — Martin Luther King, Jr. — about whom Nixon had heard good things. Nixon had asked him to speak to an NAACP meeting in July, 1955. "As I listened to him speak," Nixon says, "I knew he could be a leader. I turned to my friend and said, 'I don't know how I'm going to do it, but one day I'm going to hang him to a star.'"

Five months later, after Mrs. Parks' arrest, Nixon got the community leaders together and they formed the Montgomery Improvement Association to boycott the bus company. He persuaded the others to appoint King head of the new organization. "I had to show him the ropes of how to organize. But King did a good job

Rosa Parks, with E.D. Nixon, on the way to her trial for failing to yield her bus seat to white passengers in violation of Montgomery's law.



Don Cravens

as leader and he spread the word about the boycott. He had an incredible ability to communicate with the audience," says the 81-year-old Movement veteran.

It should be noted, though, that it was a woman who made the decision that day to keep her seat and defend her human rights. She wasn't the first; others before her had refused to bow to the Jim Crow laws. But Rosa Parks, tired from her day's labor, made her move at a time when conditions had jelled and could sustain a movement to support her. A lot of people were tired — and when she kept her seat, she kept it for millions; she was jailed for millions; and ultimately millions would respond.

Here, E.D. Nixon and two women, a black and a white, good friends who have seen and worked for many of the changes growing out of the Movement spawned in Montgomery, reflect on its beginnings and speak of some of what has transpired since. Johnny Carr has been president of the Montgomery Improvement Association for the past 13 years. Virginia Durr has been working for progressive causes in the South since the labor struggles and New Deal reforms of the 1930s.

Tom Gardner is a writer and photographer who has covered movements for change in the South since 1964. He is now a staff writer for the Montgomery Advertiser.

At left: Walking to work during the Montgomery bus boycott; at right: After five months of the boycott, Martin Luther King announces the boycott would continue until the bus lines were desegregated.

E.D. NIXON

Rosa Parks and I went back together about 12 years — she did volunteer work for me as secretary to the NAACP. The first thing in anybody's mind if they saw the police arresting Rosa Parks was to call me. And when they called me, I wasn't at my office, but the man next door to my office put a note on my telephone to "call Mrs. Nixon, it's urgent."

When I came back, I saw it and I called Mrs. Nixon and she said they had arrested Mrs. Parks. I said, "What for?" She said, "I don't know. Go get her." As if I could just go get her. So I called down to the jail and the guy told me it was none of my business, and he cussed me.

I had to find out what the charges were, so then I called Clifford Durr and told him about it, and he called down there. He called back and said, "Mr. Nixon, Mrs. Parks is charged with violating Alabama's segregation law." And I said, "I'm going down there and make bond for her." He told me how much the bond would be — \$100 — and told me he would go with me. I went by and picked him up and by the time he got down to the car, here comes Mrs. Durr running, and so the three of us went down to the jailhouse, we got her out and carried her home. We asked about using her case as a test case. And she agreed.

I got up the next morning at five o'clock and started calling people. I called Ralph D. Abernathy, and he said, "Yeah, Brother Nixon, you know I'll go along with you." And then I called the Reverend H.H. Hubbard, and he said, "Yeah, Brother Nixon, I'll go along with you. I'll get ahold of Ab and we'll help you call the rest of the ministers." I said, "That'll be fine."

Then the third person I called was Martin Luther King. He said, "Brother Nixon, let me think about it awhile and call me back," and I called him back. He said, "Yeah, Brother Nixon, I decided, I'm going to go along with you." And I said, "That's fine, because I called 18 other people and I told them they're going to meet at your church this evening."

And so they met down there that evening. I wasn't there — I had to go

to work — but they didn't get anything done. That was Friday, December 2. So I called Joe Azbell and I told him about it. I told him, "Joe, you got a chance now to do something decent. If you want to do it, I'll give you a hot lead." He said, "I'll tell you what, if I can't write something to help you all, I won't even write it at all." He came over and I told him about it, and he wrote the story [the one carried on the newspaper's front page Sunday morning giving the place and the time of the "secret meeting."]

That story really helped bring the people together. I called the ministers that morning: "Good morning, Reverend Sir, good morning," I said. "Have you read the paper this morning? Have you noticed Joe Azbell's story?" I said, "Take it to church with you, tell the people about it, tell them we want 2,000 people at Holt Street Baptist Church tomorrow night."

If we didn't have 7,500 people out there, we didn't have a soul. We filled up the church, and all out in the streets. That was a mass meeting. But the ministers were scared to death; they didn't want their names to get out. And I told them they were talking like little boys.

Now this is from *Stride Toward Freedom*, by Martin Luther King, Jr., talking about the first mass meeting. He says, "After a lengthy discussion, E.D. Nixon rose impatiently. 'We are acting like little boys,' he said. 'Somebody's name will have to be known, and if we are afraid, we might just as well fold up right now. We must also be men enough to discuss our recommendations in the open. This idea of secretly passing something around on paper is a lot of bunk. The white folks are eventually going to find it out anyway. We better decide now if we're going to be fearless men or scared boys.' With this forthright statement, the air was cleared. Nobody would again suggest that we try to conceal our identity or avoid facing the issue head-on. Nixon's courageous affirmation had given new heart to those who were about to be crippled by fear."

E.D. Nixon went on to spend most of his time during the next year raising the money and promoting cars for the car pools that helped sustain the bus



Wide World Photos

boycott. Money and station wagons came from all over the country, from individuals and groups, especially labor unions. Nixon points with particular appreciation to help from the sleeping car porters, the auto workers and the garment workers unions. The Montgomery black community dug deep into their own pockets as well. And help came, too, from some local whites:

All white people weren't against the bus boycott. There were the Durrs, of course, you knew where they stood, but there were others. On the day when they arrested 93 of us, at five a.m. a man called me, a white man, and said, "I'll be right over there, I want to get there before the police get there." He came over and said, "Mr. Nixon, I'm sure they ain't gonna let me get down there and make bond for you, and I don't want you to stay in jail. Don't let them take no picture of you behind the bars." And he ran his hand in his pocket and pulled out 10 \$100 bills.

Then right around six a.m., another white man called, a man who ran a business in a black neighborhood,

and asked me if we had enough money to put up cash bonds. I said, "Well, I doubt that." He said, "I'll tell you what I'm gonna bring you: I'll loan you \$1,000." And then he said so-and-so is coming around to bring you \$1,000. So we had \$3,000. I went to jail. And we got \$11,000 altogether. I had money in my pockets. The bond was going to be \$100, and I had enough money to make bond for everybody in the case.

We were arrested for violating the Alabama boycott law. That was in February. And every time they did something like that the people got stronger and stronger. We met twice a week, at different churches, and there was never a seat left.

It was a tough fight, it was really tough, and the bus boycott wasn't by any means the only thing we did. But if I were a young man and had to do it all over, I'd do it again. Right now, I don't mind telling you, I don't know of anybody living that's getting any more joy out of the work that he's done and can look back on.

VIRGINIA DURR

In 1953, Cliff [Virginia's husband] opened his law office, and I became his secretary. His nephew, Nesbitt Elmore, had been the first civil-rights lawyer in Montgomery; he had taken cases Mr. Nixon brought him. And he had just a terrible time. He was criticized. He had been a rising young lawyer, but when he took these civil-rights cases it absolutely ruined his practice. And then he went to Texas, but he had made a dent.

So Mr. Nixon began to bring these civil-rights cases to Cliff, and through Mr. Nixon we met Rosa Parks, who was a seamstress at that time at the Montgomery Fair Department Store. I always hate to tell the reason I got to know her so well, because it sounds like the lady bountiful, but it wasn't that way at all. You see, I worked and I had three children. With three little daughters, it was always a question of taking up the hems or letting out the hems or taking the dresses in or letting them out, and when I worked all day in the office, I didn't have time to do all that sewing. Mrs. Parks not only

sewed all day at the Montgomery Fair, but then she also sewed at night and sewed on the weekends. So Mr. Nixon introduced me to her, and she began to do our sewing for me.

I soon became extremely devoted to her and realized what a remarkable woman she was. Mrs. Parks is really what you would call the perfect Southern lady. She's extremely well-mannered, rather shy and timid. She had great devotion to her mother, who lived with her, and she had a husband who was sick a lot, so she really was supporting three people. She had gone to Miss White's school here in Montgomery, where she was not only educated but learned to feel that she was just as good as anybody else, that she had the right to be an American citizen and to enjoy all the rights of citizenship.

The only thing she complained about very much were the buses. Mrs. Parks really resented the bus situation terribly, and Mr. Nixon did too. They had brought a number of cases, or tried to, on the whole bus situation. The first one I got interested in was the Claudette Calvin case. This was a young girl about 14. She was going to Booker T. Washington School and she was only 14, and her father was a ditch digger, I think, a day laborer, and her mother was a maid, and there was nothing in her background, as there was in Mrs. Parks', that would make her think she had any rights at all. There on Dexter Avenue she was, sitting in the bus, and the driver called back, "Nigger, move back." And she refused to move. They arrested her and took her to jail. So they decided to make a test case on Claudette Calvin, but the case fell apart.

The next one was Mrs. Parks'. People have said over and over and over again it was a planned thing. It wasn't planned at all. Now Mrs. Parks had a great deal of feeling about the way people were treated on the bus, no doubt about that, and they had tried to get the cases going, but none of them succeeded.

Where she worked was a very hot place, with steam irons, and she was naturally tired, and then she had bursitis in her shoulder that night, and also she had several packages. So when she got on the bus, the Cleveland Avenue bus, which was largely black anyway, she sat down in the first available seat, which was in that indeterminate place in between the front

ROSA PARKS INTERVIEW BY CYNTHIA STOKES BROWN

"Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found out the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them; and these will continue until they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress."

— Frederick Douglass,
August 4, 1857

In December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks resisted with neither blows nor words, but with a simple act of non-compliance. Most accounts of the Montgomery Bus Boycott would have us conclude that she acted suddenly and spontaneously, for no other reason than that her feet hurt. No planning, no reflection, no relationship with other people lay behind her act — she was just a tired black woman. But we would not only be very wrong, we would also be seriously slighting Rosa Parks, for she had been thoughtfully resisting injustice for years.

Forty-two years old when she refused to give up her seat on the bus, Mrs. Parks (born Rosa McCauley) had lived in or near Montgomery since childhood. Her father was a carpenter, her mother a teacher; early on, the family had moved from Tuskegee to a little farm near Montgomery, where the girl often stayed awake nights fearfully awaiting the arrival of the Ku Klux Klan, though it never appeared.

Her mother was a woman who had been mistreated badly but had the courage to stand her ground against trouble. Mrs. Parks recently recalled one of those times: "Years ago there was an item that a collector was going to take from her. In fact, it was a coat that was not quite paid for. My stepfather bought it, and he owed \$2. The man was coming to take the coat. But she told him, 'You are not going

to take this off my back, I know.' And he didn't do it. She was often telling people what they wouldn't do, those who be oppressors. Instead of saying, 'Yes, sir,' she was always saying, 'No, you won't do this' or 'You won't do that.'"

Rosa McCauley attended Miss White's School and then Alabama State College, and a few weeks before her twentieth birthday, she married Raymond Parks. He was a barber, and when she first met him in 1931, he was helping raise money to save the Scottsboro Boys from the electric chair. In the early 1940s, Mrs. Parks joined the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP, serving as secretary and working with young people. Most young people, though, were discouraged by their parents and teachers, who told them they had better leave the NAACP alone, they had better not disturb the "good race relations" in Montgomery if they wanted to get along in life.

How could race relations have been considered "good?" Mrs. Parks explains, "Everything possible that was done by way of brutality and oppression was kept well under the cover and not brought out in the open or any publicity presented. Occasionally — in Mississippi, for instance, with the murder of Emmett Till — people talked about how awful it was, when at the very same time the same act was committed against a young minister whom my husband knew very well. With the exception of him and this young man's mother and the men who threw him off the bridge into the river, no one knew. She was not supposed to complain. There were several cases of people that I knew personally who met the end of their lives in this manner and other manners of brutality without even a ripple being made publicly by it. So we knew this."

The bus was the place where black people were rudely and routinely reminded of where they stood with white society. Mrs. Parks tells of one incident that her mother endured on a bus: "She sat down near the back of the bus in a seat with a young white serviceman, and he became so incensed because she dared take this seat that he threatened to throw her off the bus. She stood up very politely, smiled



Courtesy SCLC

in his face, and said, 'You won't do that.' I was hardly able to contain myself. But before I could say anything, there came a very deep bass voice of a brother in the back of the bus. I don't know who he was or what he looked like, but he said very clearly, very distinctly, 'If he touches her, I'm hanging my knife in his throat.' So he didn't touch her, and I was happy he didn't, because he would have been pretty badly hurt by me with what I had, only my fingers."

Rosa Parks worked as a seamstress at Montgomery Fair Department Store, altering the clothes bought by white customers. Despite her work with the NAACP, she says she did not feel courageous at all. By her account, she felt tense, nervous and upset most of the time. "All of the suffering and all of the struggling and the effort that we put forth just to be human beings sometimes seemed a little too much." She believed that she was not going to benefit personally, that she had been destroyed too long ago. But she was willing to face whatever came in the hope that the young people would benefit.

Then in the summer of 1955, she got the chance for a break and a change. Myles Horton, the director of the Highlander Folk School, wanted someone from Montgomery to come up to Highlander, and he asked two of his good friends there — E.D. Nixon

and Virginia Durr — whom to invite. They agreed that the person who should go was Rosa Parks, who badly needed rest and support.

Mrs. Parks had never before experienced interracial living. But for two weeks in Tennessee she ate with white people and slept in the same dormitories with them. Highlander had been defying the segregation laws of Tennessee since the early '40s to provide a place where blacks and whites could meet together.

At Highlander Mrs. Parks met two people who came to mean a great deal to her. One was Myles Horton, who, she says, "just washed away and melted a lot of my hostility and feeling of prejudice against the white Southerner because he had such a wonderful sense of humor. I often thought about many things he said and how he could strip the white segregationists of their hardcore attitudes and how he could confuse them, and I found myself laughing when I hadn't been able to laugh in a long time."

She continues, "People were trying to make it seem impossible to have that type of living that he had organized at Highlander. There was a great thing about black and white people sitting down to the same table eating. Now the black person could stand up and hand them the food at the table and have a meal. But the two were never supposed to sit together and have a meal. But he managed it, and these reporters were asking him, 'How do you get the two races to eat together?' And he says, 'First, the food is prepared. Second, it's put on the table. Third, we ring the bell.' I find myself just cracking up many times."

Mrs. Parks also met Septima Clark, then serving as the school's director of education, a woman whom she soon admired for her ability to organize and hold things together in the informal setting there. And Mrs. Parks says she quickly came to hope that some of Clark's great courage and dignity and wisdom would rub off on her.

In the meetings, though, Clark says she found Rosa Parks to be so nervous that she would not tell about her work with the NAACP in Montgomery, which had included getting the Freedom Train to make a stop there. But one evening in the dormitory every-

body started singing and dancing, white and black women together, and they asked, "Rosa, tell us how in the world you got that Freedom Train to come to Montgomery." This is how Clark remembers it:

"Mrs. Parks said, 'It wasn't an easy task. They wouldn't let the Freedom Train come unless the white and black children went in together. So they did, and that was a real victory for us.' But she said, 'After that I began getting obscene phone calls from people because I was president of the youth group. That's why Mrs. Durr wanted me to come up here and see what I could do when I went back home with this same group.'

"The next day in the workshop I said, 'Rosa, tell these people how you got that Freedom Train to Montgomery.' She hated to tell it. She thought that certainly somebody would go back and tell white people. But she got up and told that group about it.

"At the end of the workshop we always say, 'What do you plan to do back home?' Mrs. Parks said she planned to work with those kids and to tell them that they had the right to belong to the NAACP, they had the right to do things like going through the Freedom Train.

"Rosa had not planned at Highlander that she was going to refuse to get up out of her seat. That evidently came to her that day. But many people at the Highlander workshop told about the discrimination on the buses. I guess practically every family around Montgomery had had trouble with people getting on buses. They'd had a hard time. They had a number of cases where bus drivers had beaten 15-year-olds who sat up in the front or refused to get up from their seat and give it to whites coming in. That was the kind of thing they had, and they had taken it long enough." □

Cynthia Stokes Brown grew up in Madisonville, Kentucky, and now teaches and writes in Berkeley, California. This article is part of a longer piece based on recent interviews with Septima Clark, Virginia Durr and Rosa Parks. She thanks them for telling their story and also thanks Marge Frantz, Myles Horton, Herb Kohl, Sue Thrasher and Alice Walker for helping her understand it.



Charlie Steed/Montgomery Advertiser-Journal

and the back. There were two blacks sitting across the aisle and a black sitting by her, and then some white people got on the bus and the driver turned his head and yelled, "Niggers, move back!" She refused to move, so they came and arrested her. She never said anything; they just took her to jail.

Well, Cliff and I had come home from the office, and Mr. Nixon called and said that Fred Gray, who was then the lawyer for the NAACP, was out of town. Mr. Nixon had called down to the jail about Mrs. Parks, but they wouldn't tell him anything.

Mr. Nixon came by and got Cliff, and I went with them. Mr. Nixon put the bond up for her because he owned property and we didn't. And we all went over to her apartment, and she said she wanted to make a test case and take it all the way through. Cliff told her that he could probably get her off on a technicality, but she said she didn't want to do that, she wanted to take it all the way through the courts and do away with segregation on the buses entirely.

She was arrested on December 1, a

Thursday night. Then the trial was on Monday morning, and the courtroom was absolutely packed, you couldn't get in it, and there was a tremendous crowd outside the court, too. That night they had the meeting at the Holt Street Baptist Church, and I tried to go, but you couldn't get within blocks of it. Not only was the church absolutely packed but there were just thousands of people around the church. They had a loudspeaker so you could hear what was being said, but you couldn't get in. That was the night that Dr. King made his famous speech, which as Mr. Nixon says, hung him to the stars. Really, it was absolutely marvelous, wonderful.

They decided that night that they would not ride the buses. So they walked for 381 days. It was the most amazing thing. You would see these old women walking back and forth, whether it was cold or hot or rainy. And you'd pick them up, and my friends and I would compare notes about it — they would all quickly say exactly the same thing. You'd see this big crowd walking toward Cloverdale every morning and walking back at

At left: E.D. Nixon holding a picture of A. Philip Randolph; at right: Fred Gray, Virginia Durr, Johnny Carr and Rosa Parks at a 25th anniversary commemoration of the Montgomery bus boycott.

night, and you'd stop and pick one of them up and say, "So you're supporting the boycott?" "Oh, no ma'am, don't have nothing to do with that boycott. The lady I work for, her little girl was sick this morning, so she couldn't take me." Nobody, never, would admit they were supporting the boycott.

We were living then at Mrs. Durr's house, and her old cook, Mary, would rush down every day when we came home and ask us what was happening. She was terribly excited about the boycott. But when she was asked by the people in the house, my mother-in-law and all, "Mary, are you supporting the boycott?" Mary would say, "No, ma'am, I don't have nothing to do with the boycott, and none of my family has nothing to do with the boycott. We just walk, we just don't have nothing to do with the boycott at all." And later I said, "Mary, why in the world did you tell such a story as that?" And she said, "Well, when your hand's in the lion's mouth, the best thing to do is pat it on the head. Yeah, the best thing to do is pat it on the head."

The thing that was so amazing is that it was supported almost 100 percent. I don't think during that whole period of time I saw one black on the bus. I had a woman who came and washed and ironed for me, and I would go get her in the morning and take her back. The mayor said that the reason the blacks were winning was that the white women of Montgomery would take their maids back and forth. The police were on the watch, and if you drove 26 miles an hour in a 25 zone, you were immediately arrested. But the reaction of most of the women was so funny — they got all mad at the mayor and they said, "If the mayor wants to do my washing and ironing and cooking and cleaning and raise my children, let him come out here and do it. No, I'm not going to give her up."

It's not that these white women supported the boycott, and they didn't think of it that way at all. They just thought they were getting their maids. And it wasn't just that they



Tom Gardner

didn't want them to walk, either. If they lived a long way, walking would make them late in the morning. Of course, a lot of the maids did walk, the ones that had always ridden the bus. But the women who had cars had always gone and gotten them. I had always gone and gotten my washlady, and taken her home in the afternoon. She was a wonderful old lady. She belonged to a church called the Church of the Holiness of God, and she was a great admirer of Dr. King's, and she said that she would see the angels spreading their wings when she went to one of his meetings, lighting on his shoulders and spreading their wings. And I think she really did see it.

They had a meeting every Monday night at different churches all over the city, and this was how they kept the people's morale up. Oh my goodness, those meetings were absolutely remarkable, they were amazing.

It was a terrifically thrilling period. It was like seeing people come up out of the darkness and see the light. There was a feeling that the human spirit couldn't be crushed no matter what you did to it — not utterly crushed. I wouldn't have missed it for anything, and I'm always so sorry for the young people today who didn't have the same opportunity, because I don't think they've ever seen anything that exciting.

JOHNNY CARR

The civil-rights struggle grew out of the brave act of one woman. As has been said many times — a woman sat down and the world turned around. On that afternoon when she left work she did not know that her footsteps would lead to so great a movement. I am a firm believer that God used this incident and the leadership that was given by Dr. King to bring America and the world to a realization of the great injustices that the black and poor Americans were suffering.

Several organizations had worked very hard to get justice, but there seemed to be no justice for black citizens. They were denied first-class citizenship. They were denied decent jobs and housing and they could not vote. And the separate educational facilities were very unequal.

We look back in the '30s, '40s and '50s and we see a struggling people with leaders such as E.D. Nixon, who was looked upon as one who was not afraid to fight for his people, and Dr. S.S. Seay, and many others who supported the NAACP, the Montgomery Improvement Association, the Women's Political Council and others. But it seems that in spite of all we did, we were never able to arouse the people to rally to a cause until 1955.

One of the problems black people had was denial of access to public accommodations. We did not have the privilege, for instance, of using the elevators in public buildings. The Bell Building was one. Every time I go to the Bell Building now and ride the elevator, I think about the day when they had separate elevators marked "colored." Montgomery Fair, downtown, the big store that Rosa Parks worked in, had elevators that they refused to allow blacks to ride.

There were also, of course, the separate black and white water fountains. On the water fountains everywhere you went, if there were accommodations for blacks, there was a sign on them that said "colored." It was impossible for a person to go to a restroom downtown unless you found a black cafe or establishment you could go to. You could go in their stores and spend all of your money, but you couldn't use accommodations like these.

There were also stores that denied blacks the privilege of trying on certain garments in the stores. For instance, when a black person would go in to try on a hat, they would tell you you had to put a stocking cap on your head first. If you tried to establish an account at any of these stores, they would never call you "Mrs." It would always be "Johnny Carr" or "Mary," you know, just first and last



UPI Photo

names. Montgomery Fair was one that always did this. There were so many things that blacks suffered that at this point when you tell someone about it, it seems like a fairy tale, but it was true.

There was a human relations council. That was the only organization where blacks and whites were meeting together prior to 1955. They harassed those people. If they went to a meeting at night, the police would get their tag numbers and show up at their jobs the next day. It was hard for the whites who were involved, including the ministers. Any time you stood up and spoke out against something that was wrong for human beings, you were just branded.

This is what was happening in Montgomery and the South, and really all over the country.

When people say, "Look at the changes," I always point out they were made because someone made them do it. It wasn't that they all of a sudden decided one day these things are wrong, let's get together and change these things. Someone had to suffer for it. And there has been a lot of suffering and a lot of blood shed to bring about even what we have today. Because when you went about doing what was needed to make things move, many other things happened.

Every stage of the periods we have gone through to get certain changes

At left: Rosa Parks sits in the front of a Montgomery bus on December 21, 1956, after a Supreme Court ruling banning segregation; at right: Rev. Martin Luther King, Rev. Ralph Abernathy, Rev. Glenn Smiley and an unidentified woman ride a Montgomery bus soon after the Supreme Court ruling.

has had its violence; people were killed and maimed fighting for their rights. And it had to go all the way to the courts before finally being resolved. And that only happened because the suffering people were going through down here made folks in other parts of the country sit up and protest. Right now it doesn't appear there is as much going on because you don't see as many visible protests. But there is a smoldering underneath.

Of course it was a long, hard struggle before the buses were integrated. Blacks were always able to ride on public transit in Montgomery — buses, streetcars, whatever. But they always had to take the back seats or stand if all the blacks' seats were filled.

On the bus that came into the black community, the South Jackson bus, blacks could have almost all the seats on that bus except for the seats just behind the driver. Even if the bus was filled up, you didn't sit in those very front seats until the bus passed St. Margaret's Hospital, which meant you were out of the white community. Then the driver would turn around and say, "You all can sit up here." The average indignant person would just keep standing.

All of the drivers were white until after 1956. Some of them were kind, but some of them were so nasty. They would take the money at the front door, then you had to go around to the back door if you were black to get in. But if the bus was crowded and you didn't hurry up and squeeze in there, he'd take off and leave you.

There was a young woman named Claudette Calvin. This was before the boycott. She refused to get up off her seat on the bus one day and was arrested. She went to court and was fined, but we were not able to get the movement behind her. There were several incidents like that. The Montgomery Civic League and the NAACP would call meetings and organize support, but it never grew into anything. That's why I always used the phrase that the man and the hour met. Dr. King was here when Mrs. Parks' case came up, and he was selected to be the leader at that time.

There really wasn't a decision as such to focus on the buses instead of other issues. When the first meeting

was called, the idea was to stay off the buses one day to show our resentment about how Mrs. Parks was treated. And when they had the first mass meeting at Holt Street Baptist Church, the thing really started to blossom into what it became. If the city fathers had just given one inch it might not have.

All we were asking at first was that blacks be able to take available seats from the back to the front, with whites seated from front to back, and we were just going to stay off one day. It wasn't the plan of the people all that much. But things started moving and Dr. King was the type of leader he was, plus the people he had with him like Reverend Hubbard and others. The response of the people was so strong in these mass meetings, they would think maybe we need to keep moving forward.

They didn't dream people would stay off the buses 381 days. But they did. There was one point where they took all the buses off the street because they weren't making any money.

After the protest was over they asked them to hire black bus drivers. But the city said, "No. If we hired black bus drivers, blood would run in the streets like water."

So then we took it up with the bus company officials in Chicago. They sent their representatives down here and talked to the people. They told us to find competent bus drivers and they would hire them. Then they went into the city fathers, who said they would pull out their franchise if blacks were hired.

The man met with us at nine the next morning and said the company had okayed the hiring of black drivers. And he added, "One thing we want you to understand — we don't have any black routes or white routes. A bus driver drives any route. But we're going to hire black bus drivers and if the city fathers say they are going to take the franchise, they'll just have to prove it. The only thing we want to know is — are you all ready to suffer whatever consequences may occur when we start using these drivers?" Every person there said we were ready.

We did have some incidents where whites shot at a bus, things like this. I don't think any drivers were physically attacked or injured, but they



Wide World Photos

were insulted. Sometimes a white would start to get on the bus and see it was a black driver and get back off. But there was never as much white clientele as black anyway.

During the boycott, we formed car pools. At that time they said we were breaking the law if we formed car pools. This was a station right here. People used to be at my house at 6:30 in the morning to ride to work. We had met at churches for rides, but they broke that up. So then we started meeting at houses. My car is my car and I can ride anybody I want to in it. Sometimes I had to get seven or eight people to work in the morning and then we had to get to work ourselves.

The mayor said as soon as the first rainy day came, all the blacks would be back on the buses and glad to get back on. The first day it rained it was a sight to see — people just walking in the rain, water just dripping off of them, soaked but they just kept walking. And it poured that day, and all of us who had cars drove all over town picking them up.

Every time the mayor or one of them said something it just reinforced the Movement and helped us to be

more forceful in what we were trying to do. Some of the white businessmen said if the mayor would just keep his mouth shut, it would have ended because every time he opened his mouth, he seemed to put his foot in it.

After 381 days, the buses were completely integrated. Dr. King and Dr. Abernathy were the first persons who rode the bus after the boycott. They got on and just rode the bus all around, sitting right up front.

Dr. King always took a realistic view of what you should be doing as you gained and what the other man would be thinking as he lost what he thought he had. He would illustrate it at the meetings, saying, “If you had something and someone took it away from you, what would your attitude be?” All that was part of the nonviolent attitude. He said not to be ugly or anything but polite when we got on the bus.

The boycott put Dr. King in a position of leadership, and it gave people the courage to stand up and fight for other things. After the buses we had a project to integrate the lunchrooms, the library [blacks were not allowed in the main downtown library] and the city parks. Oak Park

[the only municipal park at the time] was closed down, and they closed the swimming pool down too and never did open that back up. Now, 25 years since the boycott, we can point with pride to many accomplishments. We have fair housing laws, we have better jobs, we can go to any public place, we can vote but won't. We have elected officials and representatives on many of the boards of the community. And we can attend the school or university or college of our choice.

Yet we realize that we have not overcome all of the obstacles in our lives. When we see hate in the eyes of our fellow man, when we see the racist organizations coming back all over the country, we know that there is much left to do. We have come a long way, but have a long way to go. □

G
 I'm gon-na sit at the wel-come ta - ble,
 C
 I'm gon-na sit at the wel-come ta-ble one of these
 G D7 G
 days, hal-le-lu - jah, — I'm gon-na sit at the wel-come
 B7 Em C
 ta - ble, gon-na sit at the wel - come
 D7 G
 ta - ble one of these days.

I'm gonna sit at the welcome table one of these days.

I'm gonna walk the streets of glory,
 I'm gonna walk the streets of glory
 one of these days, hallelujah,
 I'm gonna walk the streets of glory,
 I'm gonna walk the streets of glory
 one of these days.

I'm gonna tell God how you treat me

I'm gonna sit at Woolworth's lunch counter

I'm gonna get my civil rights

I'm gonna walk this ole picket line

UPI Photo



GREENSBORO SIT-INS

THOMAS

February 1, 1960, marks the date of the historic Greensboro sit-in by David Richmond, Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeill and Ezell Blair, students at all-black North Carolina A&T University. Their action sparked student protests at lunch counters around the South and in some Northern cities. (See "The Greensboro Sit-Ins," Southern Exposure, Vol. VI, No. 3, an excerpt from William Chafe's history of race relations in the city entitled *Civilities and Civil Rights*.)

The segregated lunch counters were not eliminated by the first wave of sit-ins in Greensboro. City officials called for a cooling-off period, but when Woolworth's and other segregated eating facilities refused to negotiate seriously, a second wave of protests began in 1962.

The following interviews – conducted by the Greensboro Public Library's Oral History Project, headed by Eugene Pfaff, Jr. – offer insight into the organizing and protest activities within the Afro-American communities.

Although Jesse Jackson is the most prominent personality to emerge from the Greensboro demonstrations, Pfaff focuses on others who contributed to the situation behind the scenes. William A. Thomas, Jr., was a student at all-black Dudley High School at the time of the 1960 sit-ins. At first the young high school student was on the fringes of the sit-ins, but when A&T recessed for the summer, his leadership was needed.

Dr. Elizabeth "Lizzie" Laizner began teaching at Bennett College, a black women's college in Greensboro, the semester following the initial sit-ins. In 1962, she got involved as transportation coordinator for Bennett

students, and was one of the few whites in the city to join the Congress of Racial Equality. She is currently a professor of humanities at Shaw University, a predominantly black university located in Raleigh.

Clarence C. "Buddy" Malone, Jr., began his law practice a few months after the 1962 wave of sit-ins. Affiliated with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Malone had defended several persons who were victims of civil-rights violations. At that time, he was one of the few Movement lawyers in North Carolina, and traveled from his native Durham County to nearby counties representing black and indigent defendants.

During the Greensboro sit-ins, Malone was retained by CORE, receiving only his expenses as compensation, as was the case with most civil-rights attorneys in the mass demonstrations in the South. Along with the national CORE, he set the trial strategy.

Dr. Willa B. Player was president of Bennett College, a private black institution, during the sit-ins. Her supportive role during the demonstrations stood in sharp contrast to that of President Lewis Dowdy at North Carolina A&T, which was dependent on the state for most of its funds.

I first became involved my senior year in high school. I was a student at Dudley. That was during the summer of 1960, right after the sit-ins first started. Initially, the students at A&T felt that the high school students were too young to actually be involved in the sit-ins, but they found that the situation was not going to be resolved by the time school was out, and that many of the students that initially participated in these demonstrations were from out of town. They weren't there to carry on, so that's when the high school students initially got involved.

At that time, the NAACP's basic tactic was through the courts, through legal action. We felt as a result of the sit-ins that more was needed. I was president of the youth chapter of NAACP in Greensboro at the time. Through Dr. George Simkins, then president of the adult branch, we contacted James Farmer, national director of CORE, inquiring about the possibility of forming a CORE chapter in Greensboro. Through those efforts, a CORE chapter was in fact initiated in 1960, and I became its chairman. Our activities consisted basically of picketing the dime stores, leafletting, negotiating with the mayor.

What really triggered the massive demonstrations was an inability on the part of the political and business structure to take the damn thing seriously. Because we didn't have the violent outbreaks and disturbances that characterized demonstrations that existed in other parts of the country, they thought that the thing would just go away. They attempted to ignore us.

In fact, at one point, the mayor did not even want to negotiate with the students. He suggested that we send some "reasonable, mature" adults down to negotiate with them. We quickly informed him and the other committee members that it was not the mature adults that were out in the street and that if he wanted to get us out of the street, he would sit down and talk to us, which he eventually did, and that's when the problems were worked out.

Once students knew what was going on, it had a snowballing effect. We utilized the media, we utilized leaflets. The local churches were very cooperative in letting us use their churches for mass meetings. You had to have some central place where instructions could be given as to exactly what tactic would be used that particular evening, exactly what strategies we would be using, where we were going, etc. The mass meeting afterwards was emotional, religious and also strategic. It afforded us the opportunity to assess what we had done and to make plans for the next day. Each day's activities were in fact planned with some degree of flexibility to be able to adjust to the situation once we arrived at our target area. It did not just happen; there were factors to be considered and analyzed before it was decided exactly what would occur: you may have felt that a silent demonstration may have been more effective than the singing of a more vocal demonstration. CORE taught us how to respond to different situations, and other communities were able to look at us and learn from the experiences we had in Greensboro.

Things, in terms of action, went pretty much according to plan. The basic form of action was through economic withdrawal, another name for boycotting, and through street demonstrations. Very little litigation went on at that time, other than defending those people who were arrested.

After they started to arrest people, we literally adopted the slogan that we were going to fill up the jails. Again, that was an economic thing. It cost the city of Greensboro and the state of North Carolina a considerable amount of money to house these people, to feed them and to guard them, for no reason. The jails were literally filled. They were overflowing.

I was only incarcerated twice. I

guess the reason that I was not arrested any more was that the committee that I was working on felt that I would serve more of a purpose if I was on the outside. In fact, at times I probably would have welcomed arrest. I could have gotten some rest. That way, you didn't have to be up meeting around the clock and organizing other activities 24 hours a day.

When the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce and the Greensboro Merchants Association passed resolutions advocating desegregation of all public facilities, our reaction was that we always welcomed any support we could get, but those committees had no enforcement. Resolutions are all well and good, but they could not command anyone to do anything. The point that they were trying to make with the resolution was, "Okay, we have made a resolution, so call off your dogs." We were not going to stop demonstrating until they actually desegregated. The resolutions didn't mean a damn thing. They showed some good faith, but the places were still segregated.

The arrest of A&T student body president Jesse Jackson on the felony charge of inciting to riot played right into our hands because but for that, quite possibly, the demonstrations could have fizzled down. At that particular time, the demonstrations were beginning to be the same old thing; the emotional level had reached its low ebb and we needed a lift.

There was no riot, that was a joke. The only thing that happened was that

Jesse led the group in prayer, and Captain Jackson got on his bullhorn and told us to disperse, and Jesse said "Not until we have our prayer." And he told everybody to kneel, and they did kneel, and he prayed. He prayed for the captain and everybody else, and afterwards they rose and they got back in line, two by two, and we marched back to the church.

An interesting thing about that is that I was right next to Jesse and it was myself that asked Jesse to lead us in prayer after Captain Jackson had requested or ordered us to move. Well, the difference was that I was a Greensboro boy; they considered Jesse an outsider. That's why he was arrested and not myself. They wanted to punish the outsider. I think that they felt that Jesse was conspicuous, that by eliminating him, by locking him up, then that would cause the demonstration to fizzle.

LAIZNER

I did not join CORE at first for a very strange reason: I thought at that time that this was really a black affair and that a white person might not even be wanted. I suddenly got into it when I was sitting at a friend's house and the TV was on and they showed one of

New York demonstrators march outside Woolworth's in support of Southern sit-ins.

courtesy Schomburg Center/NY Public Library



those slightly strange — I would call them “professional” — civil-rights workers from the North who came to help with picketing and had, somehow, managed to get himself arrested and get some publicity for himself and for the group, which was, of course, his purpose. And I remember just about blowing a gasket, saying, “Why hadn’t anybody told me that whites can be in on this?”

In the fall of ’62 our main targets were the S&W and the Mayfair [cafeterias], but when we didn’t get anywhere, the boycott was initiated in the then very busy downtown just before Christmas. It was beginning to hurt, and this is when the city nominated a human relations committee. Mayor Schenck did it. We did not realize at the time that the committee had very little power. What the committee, to my knowledge, was really supposed to look into was the justification for opening these places. Were they really being unjust to the black citizens of the town by not permitting them to come in?

We were officially approached by either the committee or the mayor to call off the boycott and preferably cease picketing and give the committee a chance. I still remember the session we had in open meeting; it was very heated. I was on the side of the group that we called the “activists,” the ones who said, “Nothing’s going to come out of the committee; we’d better go on.” Bill Thomas, Pat Patterson and Lewis Brandon were some of the moderates. The majority decided that we should give the committee a chance and cease demonstrations until up to sometime in February, 1963, whenever they would come through.

In a very moving declaration signed by the head of the committee, who was either one of the big textile people or one of the big bankers, the committee brought out the injustice that segregation was doing to the black citizens of Greensboro and they felt that definitely those places should be opened. It sounded gorgeous. That declaration was printed all over and much praised, but it wasn’t worth the paper it was printed on. The trouble was in the last line: “Unfortunately, our committee has no power to enforce these suggestions.” That was it. That’s when we restarted and the first thing we did was to picket the city hall.

By early May we had picketed city

hall and had done a little picketing of restaurants, but it didn’t go very far because people were tired, and there was this question: should we or shouldn’t we go on and do something right now with exams staring students in the face? Should we prepare something big for the fall? That is when Bill Thomas had a call meeting at one of the Bennett dorms.

Bill, leaning against the piano, put it to the others and gave two possibilities: “Let’s either do something little or let’s not do anything. Let those of us who will be in Greensboro in the summer prepare a big thing for the fall.” We almost had the feeling that Bill leaned toward that, which sounded good and would have been good. At that time, some of us spoke up for the idea that something *had* to be done, we *had* to make people aware of segregation. A small group was nominated to get together and work out something for a small picketing job. And that small picketing job that we worked out, and which was approved, was McDonald’s.

Several of us had gone over to High Point in support of their people picketing. They had halfway opened the McDonald’s over there, which gave us the idea. Also, there had been an incident at McDonald’s in Greensboro much earlier that created more stir and more sympathy for our cause than anything else. It was a letter by a non-Greensboroite in the *Daily News*. That person had been in the drive-in line at McDonalds and next to him was a black family, also in a car, and they all waited. Obviously the black man was from the North and didn’t know what the case was then. He was sent back and could not be served. The white man was very, very furious and upset about it, and he wrote a very moving letter about it, on the injustice of it. And several people came in with strong letters in support of that. So we decided in May that the McDonald’s out at Summit Avenue would be a good place to go.

We waited for an opportune moment when the place was pretty empty and went in in a long row. The man informed us that we had no right to be served and that we would be arrested. This is when Reverend Busch, Bill Thomas, Pat Patterson and Reverend Stanley had themselves deliberately arrested. And that was what created the stir: two ministers and the leaders of the group had been arrested.

Floyd McKissick [of CORE] immediately came down and visited them in jail. The publicity was magnificent. This is when McKissick really did the right thing. He said to the four, “Take that bail. Get out, because now we can start something. This is going to start it.” And he was 100 percent right. As soon as Bill and Pat were out, we called a meeting over at the Hayes-Taylor YMCA.

We invited the ministers, anyone who wanted to come. What we needed was to see if we could get the support of the grown-ups. If the ministers would tell the black community that this was a worthy cause, to go and support it, they would. Reverend Bishop came. He was the president of the Minister’s Association, the black one, and he said they would listen to whatever he had to say.

Reverend Bishop was sitting there, and he said, “You’re right, we will support you.” And then he said, “I realize that you have finals coming and everything. Just do something little. Picket here or there so that I can tell the people that something is going on and that you need support.”

And those of us who were there decided that if he wanted us to do something, why didn’t we go back to McDonald’s that very evening. And I remember going home and organizing the car pool. We wanted to have them spelled every hour because picketing was strenuous and it would be better for them at night. The first group was set for six or seven, then one at eight, and I came on with the last group at nine.

This was when the mess occurred, because the place had closed earlier and some — excuse me for using a nasty word — “nigger-baiting crackers” were down there in force and there wasn’t a friendly soul among them. The parking lot of McDonald’s and the service station next door were filled with between 300 and 400 jeering crackers of the nastiest kind. For them it was sort of a Sunday entertainment; for free they could stand and jeer at us. The crowd was getting unrulier and unrulier. We knew that it could get nasty as it grew later, so a little after 10:00, Bill made the decision to break up. He informed the police that we would go fast to our cars and get out.

We decided to do something again the next day. This is when it really got big. The A&T students must have told

others; they just simply kept coming. We had practically 2,000 that evening. McDonald's was completely filled with people, and the manager went up to Bill Thomas and said, "I am closed, but you are still trespassing. If you do not leave, we can have you arrested." This is where Bill made the very, very smart move of saying, "No, we have done what we wanted to do. The place is closed for the night and I guess we will go back."

One of the young ladies then said, "Let's go downtown, and maybe go by the Carolina Theater." We made a totally spontaneous decision. We all went downtown, the whole spate of us, and there was that tremendously moving scene where we knelt down on the sidewalk. I don't remember which hymn we did. It was not our usual "We Shall Not Be Moved," it was a more religious one that someone suddenly started humming. A young man who later became an Army chaplain was the only one standing, and he prayed for the people in the Carolina Theater. It was so reminiscent of what one year later Martin Luther King said, that we should all be as brothers, that God should enlighten the people who are sitting in there and that we should all be together as brothers.

McDonald's capitulated four days later. We were on our way home from picketing downtown on Tuesday when we were told, "Don't disband. Go to the Y. There's something going on there." The manager of McDonald's was there. What he said then was very contrary to what he had said on that

Sunday. He thanked us, and Captain Jackson thanked us for our restraint. And the manager apologized to the four gentlemen whom he had arrested.

On Wednesday, at a mass meeting at the Y, we decided we were now going for an arrest. We had seen what an arrest of just four people had done for McDonald's; now let's see what this is going to do for the others. Some of us had had some courses in nonviolence with Floyd McKissick and some reps that came in from CORE. So we planned to jam the revolving door at S&W, and jam it successively. We tied the place up completely in this way. The whole mass of students were out there picketing where nothing could happen. And they knew *exactly* who'd be in the first group, who'd be in the second group, who'd be in the third group. As soon as we were told that we were under arrest, we would go out and the next group would jam the door again and be arrested.

I was in the first group. I didn't, shall we say, follow the other 800, if you see what I mean. I was mainly the white *auslagersshield*, the window dressing. Unfortunately, you got better publicity if you were white. I would seem much more important to people than I actually was, by the fact that I had to regularly be toted out and put in the first row.

The first time we were arrested, we were let go again. But people were getting pretty upset, so we decided on Friday this time they were going to

keep us, and they did. Our record of 1,850 arrested in one week still stands. And do you know who came in? [Willa] Player [president of Bennett College]. When we were in jail, there was a support committee nominated by Bill that could act for CORE, and Player headed that committee.

They wanted us out because it was creating a nationwide stir, it was bad for the reputation of the city, it was horrible for the finances of the city. Mayor Schenck went on vacation in Virginia, and that elderly gentleman who then became mayor [William Trotter, Mayor Pro Tem] took over. It was he who gave in to that group with Bill and Dr. Player and others, who gave them their first condition: a human relations committee headed by a black doctor, Dr. Evans.

I had heard mutterings from those who had come out of jail that they wanted to go back. The heroes that came out of jail felt that they hadn't, with their very real sacrifices, gotten enough. It could have split the group. The majority would certainly have decided on something more peaceful, but we would have antagonized our most valuable people. This is when I did something I normally did not do: I addressed the group.

I remember saying, "I know what we all want to do, and what I would like to do, too, would be to go right back. But this is not what we should do. We've got to give Dr. Evans a chance." So the march started. That was the march of 5,000.

Mr. Farmer suggested a silent march. He is a fantastic speaker. He said that it would impress them if we went there, not speaking. We marched straight through the square and then back again. We made a circle of the town. There were only three in the first row: Jackson, me and Farmer.

We had the Evans Committee. We were sure that the grown-ups would take over after students left school for the summer, and they did. The S&W was open, the movie houses were open, some other little restaurants were open. In fact, we were one of the few towns in the South that were open *before* the '64 Civil Rights Bill demanded it.

Greensboro sit-in, February 2, 1960

UPI Photo



PLAYER

I first learned of the Woolworth's sit-ins [in 1960] when we were all called downtown and heard the A&T student present his case. We, as members of the community, were trying to get a hold of what was really happening.

Ezell Blair was asked to defend his actions, which he did admirably. Here were students who were realizing that as citizens and as students at a liberal arts college they were being denied their equal rights, both under the law and under their constitutional beliefs, and freedom of expression. I defended them. I called the Bennett faculty into a meeting and told them what was happening. We went back to the purpose of a liberal arts college, and in defining those and what the girls were doing, we decided that they were carrying on the tenets of what a liberal education was all about — freedom of expression, living up to your ideals, building a quality of life in the community that was acceptable to all, respect for human dignity and personality. It was a recognition of values that applied to all persons as equals, and all persons who deserved a chance in a democratic society to express their beliefs.

We spoke to the president of the Student Senate, and we told her how the faculty felt, and that we were planning to cooperate with the girls. The only thing we requested of them was that they should give us a daily report of what they intended to do for that particular day.

By the fall of 1962, almost the entire student body at Bennett had become active in daily picketing. Governor Sanford tried to get the students to cease the demonstrations. We had a meeting at the governor's mansion in Raleigh [one of a number of meetings] designed to try to get us to pull out and stop our students from demonstrating. Then there was a meeting just with me and the CORE director and one of the Greensboro citizens, Warren Ashby, over on the Bennett campus. I distinctly remember Dr. Ashby with Dr. Farmer ask me if I would be willing to pull in the Bennett College students because the A&T students were being pulled in. The governor had written a letter to President Dowdy telling him that he should have his students stop the

demonstrations. Of course, I refused to do this.

Dr. Dowdy was under tremendous pressure. A&T was a public institution, and the difference between a public institution and a private institution was that a private institution could not be dictated to by the state.

I never equivocated on it at all; it was so clear to me that what these people were struggling for was within their rights. Because of that, the students were very cooperative. They would always come to me first to tell me what they were going to do or what they were planning, or what it was all about, and they would ask me if I had any suggestions. So it was a communication and a give-and-take that was so open that the students never did anything behind your back.

MALONE

From time to time, I was consulted on the legality of the decisions that were obviously made almost hour-to-hour. But for the most part, they relied on the general consensus of the CORE chapter and the national office of CORE.

It was my contention and that of CORE that the trespass law as it was being applied was unconstitutional, and for that reason we were testing the legality of it. I advised my clients that we had a moral duty to assert those

rights guaranteed to us by the Constitution. In fact, the action of the state and city in enforcing the segregation laws was both morally and legally wrong.

Ordinarily, the merchant himself or the individual business owner exercised self-help; he'd clobber the guy across the head and toss him out. It was only with the beginning of mass sit-ins that it reached large enough proportions that it was necessary to call in a large amount of state action to enforce segregation.

The individual, in his private capacity as a citizen, had a right to refuse service if he so chose. However, state action in enforcing this whim was invalid under the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. That was an abuse of police power to lend aid and enforce his private whim against the rights of other citizens.

It was simply a matter of developing trial strategy based upon the factual circumstances. In a war like that you utilize anything you can come up with that is tactically effective. One of the strongest things we had going for us was the inability of people to identify the students; we simply capitalized on the age-old adage that all blacks look alike to whites. A tremendously large number of those arrested for blocking fire exits and trespassing were dismissed for lack of evidence.

The major number of persons arrested arose out of one march. They were charged under a construction ordinance, really, for blocking a public street. What happened was that they marched down to Elm and Market Streets, the hub of the traffic center,

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and laid down in the middle of the street and blocked traffic in every direction. There must have been 1,500 or 2,000 persons arrested at that time and charged with blocking a public street. Those cases were subsequently carried to the State Supreme Court, which threw out the application of the ordinance because it was taken out of context and therefore simply did not apply.

The feeling was extreme throughout on both sides. It was a feeling of crisis, the "we's" and the "they's." Both sides exercised all of the psychological tactics that they could. For instance, I sat in on what were ostensibly official city negotiations. In an effort to call off the demonstrations, commitments were made that, before you could get in your car and turn on the radio, were being denied by officialdom, by the officials that had just made the commitment behind closed doors.

There was an absolute distrust for Mayor Schenck. It was proven time after time that anything that was said by him was what he thought was appropriate at the time with no thought of ever — in any way — adhering to any promises or discussions that he made.

The demonstrations had been going on for three or four days, possibly

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more, when the first case came to trial. There was some element that made the warrant improper, and I moved to quash that and reasonably argued the basis of my motion. And the court allowed my motion to quash.

Now, as a matter of plain old logistics, the warrants had been mimeographed. Upon the allowance of my motion to quash the first warrant, I called to the court's attention that all of the warrants were drawn exactly alike, and for that reason, I moved to quash them *all*. And of course, the district attorney then moved to amend the warrants to properly allege a crime, at which juncture I simply insisted that each of the defendants be served with new copies of the warrant because every defendant to be tried in a criminal action has a right to know of the offense whereof he is charged before coming into court. Now, this was a major bogdown tactic for the simple reason that, as many people as were in the various centers of incarceration, there were absolutely no ascertainable records of where or who anybody was.

The true spirit behind the Movement was Bill Thomas, who was reasonably unidentifiable; he was quiet

Student protests continued. In 1969, National Guard "secured" A&T's campus after Willie Grimes, a student, was killed in demonstrations over officials' handling of desegregation.

of manner and really nobody in the city administration knew where the impetus or the guidance was coming from. Since it mostly consisted of students, the Movement focused on A&T's campus. Well, Jesse Jackson at the time was president of the student body at A&T. He was the least effective of the student leaders at the time, but he represented to the power structure a leader because of his position as president of the student body. He made a couple of fiery speeches and so on. And he, being the titular head of the student body, was charged with the more serious felony of inciting to riot simply as a tactic of picking off the top — you cut off the head and the body is bound to die.

There was no riot, but there was a chance of conviction. The climate and tenor of the times were such, and of course the jury selection process was as bad as it is today. The jury selection process at the time was geared so that the sheriff or the officialdom could rig juries any way that they wanted them. Jackson's case was finally dismissed in the spirit of cooling things down.

After the momentum of the mass jail-ins and that kind of thing had stopped and negotiations had begun, there was no reason for continuing demonstrations; but while the demonstrations stopped, the litigation went on. We slugged it out for a good many weeks in the Recorder's Court, until I think everybody's tongue was dragging. So I finally requested jury trials in *all* of the cases so that we could get up to the Superior Court. The trials of the persons arrested during the height of the demonstrations went on up into the early fall, which culminated in the Supreme Court opinion in the State against Fox case, which sort of laid to rest all of the remainder of the cases.

Legally, desegregation was never accomplished through the courts. The final and ultimate blow to desegregation was dealt by the passage of the Civil Rights Bill of 1964. Bit by bit, piece by piece, we hacked away at it in the courts, and obviously the climate of the times led to the passage of the legislation. But I don't think that the climate would have been such that the legislation would have been passed in Congress had there not been the general upheavals that were really the manifestations of the seething feelings among blacks against segregation. □

G D7
 We shall not, we shall not be
 moved, — We shall not, we shall not be
 G7 C G
 moved, just like a tree, plant- ed by the wa -
 (Em) (G) D7 G
 ter, We shall not be moved. —

We shall not be moved

We are fighting for our freedom, we shall not be moved,
 We are fighting for our freedom, we shall not be moved,
 Just like a tree, planted by the water,
 We shall not be moved.

We are black and white together, we shall not be moved

We will stand and fight together, we shall not be moved

Bob Adelman/Magnum



THE NASHVILLE SIT-INS: NONVIOLENCE EMERGES



Danny Lyon

In the winter of 1960, the nation was mesmerized by a group of young black college students in Nashville, Tennessee, who appeared at a segregated lunch counter one Saturday afternoon and asked to be served. All that spring, they filled the jails and the nation with their freedom songs, sparking similar actions and demonstrations across the South. Although an earlier sit-in had been held in Greensboro, North Carolina, on February 1, 1960, it was the small coterie of Nashville students who gave impetus to the concept of nonviolent direct action and who continued through the next years to provide critical leadership to SNCC, SCLC, CORE and the Movement in cities throughout the nation. Among those students who had been meeting for months discussing the religious, ethical and tactical basis of nonviolent civil disobedience were Jim Lawson, Diane Nash, James Bevel, Bernard Lafayette, Marion Barry and John Lewis.

Jim Lawson's remarks here were published in the Southern Patriot shortly after he had been expelled from Vanderbilt Divinity School for his protest activity; the Reverend Lawson is now a pastor in Los Angeles, California. Marion Barry, now mayor of Washington, DC, was interviewed in 1967 for Howard University's Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. The John Lewis interview, conducted by Jim Sessions and Sue Thrasher, is excerpted from a longer section of Southern Exposure's new book, Growing Up Southern, published by Pantheon Books in July, 1981. Lewis, who was chairman of SNCC for several years and then director of the Voter Education Project, now works for the National Consumer Cooperative Bank.

BARRY

I was in graduate school at Fisk for two years, 1958 to 1960. I went to high school in Memphis and college at LeMoyne in Memphis, and graduated in 1958 with a bachelor of science in chemistry. Then I went to Nashville. In the latter part of 1959, Jim Lawson was holding discussions on nonviolence and how it's applicable in America. I'd never heard of nonviolence before then. I'm not a pacifist; I wasn't then. This was all new to me.

We had discussions, meetings every week. In early December, we talked about going down to various department stores, having a sit-in, trying to get served way back then. We had planned to do some testing of it before January and then start a program sometime in February or March. We were meeting on this and then February first happened in Greensboro, North Carolina. People in Greensboro were calling people, and it had spread after that first week to Durham, to Raleigh, all around in North Carolina. By the thirteenth, a lot of cities broke out with sit-ins and some arrests, some violence on the part of the white folks. So that whole weekend people around the country started moving.

That's when I started working with Diane [Nash] and Bevel and others to form a central committee in Nashville as the "core" of the Movement there. We planned strategy and demonstrated the next weekend. Then, I think it must have been the twenty-seventh of February, there was a large number of people arrested. I was arrested in that group with Bevel and Diane at Woolworth's or Kresge. This

is where Paul LePrad, who was a white student, got beat pretty badly. It was on national television and a big thing. He was one of the three or four white people joining in. For Nashville this was a very significant thing that you have white people joining blacks on anything like that.

Nashville, you know, sort of got it all out of proportion because it was sort of unusual that it would happen in Nashville. Secondly, you had a large number of Fisk and Tennessee State students involved, which was sort of unusual because Fisk is, traditionally, supposed to be one of the elite Negro schools.

At that time, Stephen J. Wright was the president. We got arrested on Saturday. We got out about 11 or 12 o'clock that Saturday night. We all went back to the campus singing freedom songs and everybody was waiting. They didn't go partying that night. They waited until we got out and came down. The next day we'd called a mass meeting for the chapel to inform students what was going on. President Wright said he wanted to address the students. We were a little reluctant because we didn't know what he was going to say. We didn't know whether he was going to say, "You all ought to stop all this mess. This is bad."

So we said, "Well he's going to say it at some point. We might as well let him say it now so we can have a chance to refute or to counteract anything he says right there on the spot."

We had a number of speakers; students spoke and then President

Wright spoke. He supported the whole thing. He said it was the kind of thing that students had to do, that he would do all he could to help and that Fisk University would do all it could to help, which was very encouraging. That was the first time in many months that he had gotten a standing ovation from anybody because, as I understand it, he wasn't very popular with the faculty or the students.

This was the first time a number of us had ever been arrested. It was certainly my first arrest. We had talked about going to jail and about making sacrifices, some things being necessary. I didn't feel anything about it. In jail I wasn't frightened. The only thing that happened was we were all packed in and we didn't like that. As far as jail, that was no big thing.

The night we got out, that Saturday night, we had an all-night meeting with lawyers. We said that we wanted to go back to jail and stay in. The whole thing was how do you plead. Do you plead guilty, not guilty, or what do you do? We said, "We'll plead not guilty and if we're found guilty we'll go back and spend whatever time is necessary in jail." The NAACP lawyers said, "Don't do that. That's not right. We're going to appeal it. Just get out. Just go down there." So we finally said, "We're going to do it." They said, "Well, if you're going to do it, well, we'll just have to be there to help you do it." So we said, "We're going to do it with or without you. We'll go down

and plead our case."

We didn't want to pay the city any money. Second, we figured even at that point that being in jail would be a dramatization of what was going on and that just the little time that we had been in on Saturday, the community had come forth and put up about \$50,000 worth of bonds to get us out that Saturday night — mortgaged their land and houses, and given us cash, savings accounts and things. This was significant for Nashville.

So on Monday night we went down and everybody pleaded not guilty. They tried one person for, I guess, half the day and they finally found him guilty. He said, "I'll go to jail," which sort of shook up the judge and the city officials. They didn't expect that. So they fined him \$50. We all decided to go to jail. So, one after another, we just started going back to jail.

After that they used the same evidence. They stood up and said, "Not guilty." And they said, "We use the same evidence and fine you \$50." Everybody went on back to jail. I think we stayed in jail that Monday night. That Tuesday they had some more trials and more people came on in jail.

On Tuesday, they put us out to work. We refused to work. On Wednesday, they had another demonstration. About a hundred people got arrested that Wednesday. So they brought them into the jail. We were in jail, I guess, until Thursday, when they

reduced our sentences and let us out.

We kept demonstrating every week. In fact, we started every day: constant demonstrations, picket lines downtown, sit-ins. We moved from about four or five stores to about 20 stores. We started a "hit-and-run" tactic where we'd go into a store; they'd ask us to leave. They closed. When you walked in, they'd close the lunch counter down. We'd leave and go to another store, and they'd ask us to leave, and we'd come back to the other store where they asked us to leave the first time. We just kept a constant thing going where we didn't get anybody arrested, but it kept the store closed. In fact, a number of places took their stools out of their counters. We were picketing and then we had a boycott of downtown. That really hurt them because a lot of Negroes really participated in that boycott.

LEWIS

The Movement during that period, in my estimation, was the finest example, if you want to refer to it, of Christian love. Sometimes we'd sit for two or three hours. We'd have our books and we'd just sit quietly, doing our homework. Then someone might walk up and hit us or spit on us or

JIM LAWSON ON NONVIOLENCE

Christian nonviolence is on the one hand a basic religious faith that God operates in human history, that evil can be transformed only by good, that love must remain love even in the presence of hatred, that forgiveness must prevail as the only mode of retaliation, that it is better to suffer obediently before God than to inflict suffering upon others, that evil is not met successfully with evil but only with radical good, the weapons of God Himself.

Such a faith is common to all the great religions of the world. From Mo Ti of ancient China through the prophets and Jesus, such a faith has been propounded, often died for, but rarely taken seriously by the mass of us.

On the other hand, nonviolence is the religious technique for encouraging and fomenting social change. It is a method rooted in the faith mentioned above. It is the social means to fulfill the social ends of the Kingdom. It is the demand of God upon those who would be the citizens of His Kingdom both today and tomorrow.

As a technique, every nonviolent strategy is determined and shaped by the essential faith, Love, the Cross, the gracious work of God both in the past and now. Thus expediency is

always ruled out.

The pure technique loses out to the faith in action, to the resistance in love which retains a quality of creativity throughout the social process. Means and ends become one and the same thing.

Paul LePrad, one of Nashville's finest nonviolent warriors, manifests the action which stems from faith. During a recent sit-in, he was hauled off a lunch counter stool by a group of white men, beaten, kicked and clobbered over the head. As his assailants left, he stood up, brushed himself off and returned to his seat.

Such an act requires the faith and hope given by God alone. It is analogous to what the entire ministry and life of Jesus proclaims. This is nonviolence. □



UPI Photo

February 13, 1960: Nashville students take their books and sit-in at local lunch counters.

do something, but it was very quiet. When I look back on that particular period in Nashville, the discipline, the dedication and the commitment to nonviolence was unbelievable.

Two or three times a week we would go and sit in. And then one particular day — it must have been leap year, because I think it was February 29, 1960, a Saturday morning — we met in Kelly's Church, and Will Campbell* came to the meeting to tell us he had received information that the police officials would have us arrested and would let all types of violence occur. Kelly came to the church and warned there would be violence. But we said we had to go. We were afraid, but we felt that we had to bear witness. So Jim Lawson and some of the others were very sympathetic and felt that if we wanted to go that we should.

It was my responsibility to print some rules, some "dos and don'ts," what people were supposed to do: sit up straight; don't look back; if someone hits you, smile; things like that. At the end it said something like, "Remember the teachings of Jesus Christ, Ghandi and Martin Luther King: may God be with you." We gave them to all those people that

* "Kelly's church" was the First Baptist Church, pastored by Kelly Miller Smith, the president of the Nashville Christian Leadership Council. Will Campbell was then working with the National Council of Churches in Nashville.

Saturday morning.

Woolworth's was the place where the first violence occurred. A young student at Fisk, Maxine Walker, and an exchange student named Paul LePrad were sitting at the counter at Woolworth's. This young white man came up and hit Paul and knocked him down and hit the young lady. Then all types of violence started. Pulling people, pushing people over the counter, throwing things, grinding out cigarettes on people, pouring ketchup in their hair, that type of thing. Then the cops moved in and started arresting people. That was my first time, the first time for most of us, to be arrested. I just felt . . . that it was like being involved in a Holy Crusade. I really felt that what we were doing was so in keeping with the Christian faith. You know, we didn't welcome arrest. We didn't want to go to jail. But it became . . . a moving spirit. Something just sort of came over us and consumed us. And we started singing "We Shall Overcome," and later we started singing "Paul and Silas bound in jail, had no money for their bail. . . ." It became a religious experience that took place in jail. I remember that very, very well, that first arrest.

Even after we were taken to jail, there was a spirit there, something you witness, I guess, during a Southern Baptist revival. I think our faith was

renewed. Jail in a sense became the way toward conversion, was the act of baptism, was the process of baptism.

I was afraid. I was afraid.

You know, during the workshops in Nashville, we never thought or heard that much about what would happen to us personally or individually. And we never really directed our feelings of hostility toward the opposition. I think most of the people that came through those early days saw the opposition — and saw ourselves, really, the participants in the Movement — as victims of the system. And we wanted to change the system. People just felt something was wrong.

The underlying philosophy was the whole idea of redemptive suffering — suffering that in itself might help to redeem the larger society. We talked in terms of our goal, our dream, being the beloved community, the open society, the society that is at peace with itself, where you forget about race and color and see people as human beings. We dealt a great deal with the question of the means and ends. If we wanted to create the beloved community, then the methods must be those of love and peace. So somehow the ends must be caught up in the means. And I think people understood that.

In the black church, ministers have a tendency to compare the plight of black people with the children of Israel. I think we saw ourselves as being caught up in some type of holy crusade, with the music and the mass meetings, with nothing on our side but a dream and just daring faith. . . . I tell you the truth, I really felt that I was part of a crusade. There was something righteous about it.

I really felt that the people who were in the Movement — and this may be short-sighted and biased on my part — were the only truly integrated society and, in a sense, the only true church in America. Because you had a community of believers, people who *really believed*. They were committed to a faith.

I was wrong, I think, to feel that way, because you shouldn't become so definitive as to believe that you have an edge on the truth. I think you have to stay open. But, you know, in the process of growing and developing, people go through different experiences. □

The image shows a musical score for the song "Hallelujah I'm A-travelin'". It consists of five staves of music in a 4/4 time signature with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are written below the notes. Chord symbols are placed above the staff: D, E7, A7, D, A7, D, Bm, G, A7, D.

Stand up and re - joice, a great day is
 here, We're rid - ing for free - dom and the
 vic - t'ry is near, Hal - le - lu - jah, I'm a -
 trav - el - in', Hal - le - lu - jah, ain't it fine, Hal - le -
 lu - jah, I'm a - trav - el - in' down free - dom's main - line.

Hallelujah I'm A-travelin'

Stand up and rejoice, a great day is here
 We're riding for freedom and the victory is near.

Chorus

Hallelujah I'm a travelin', hallelujah ain't it fine,
 Hallelujah I'm a travelin' down freedom's main line.

In 1954 our Supreme Court said, "Look a here
 Mr. Jim Crow,
 It's time you were dead."

I'm paying my fare on the Greyhound Bus line
 I'm riding the front seat to Montgomery this time.

In Nashville, Tennessee, I can order a coke
 And the waitress at Woolworth's knows it's no joke.

I'm travelin' to Mississippi on the Greyhound Bus line
 Hallelujah I'm ridin' the front seat this time.

In 1981, the Ronald Reagans said, "We're turning
 the clock back."
 But we told them, "Drop dead!"

Unemployment and poverty are ravaging the land
 We can't eat missiles, we must take a stand.



FREEDOM RIDES

In May of 1961, one of the legends of the Movement began – a journey of blacks and whites together riding south from Washington, DC, to integrate Greyhound and Trailways buses and terminals. The Freedom Ride was organized by the Congress of Racial Equality. Anne Braden, writing a few years later, described what happened:

“The ride was relatively uneventful until it reached Alabama. Then a bus was burned in Anniston and the riders were attacked by mobs there and in Birmingham; and yet another phase of the Southern struggle was underway.

“The original riders, many beaten and bloody, abandoned the ride at Birmingham, but the Nashville student group picked it up and rode a bus on to Montgomery, where they were beaten by a mob; from there riders proceeded on to Jackson, Mississippi, where they were quietly and efficiently arrested. Throughout that summer Freedom Riders continued to roll south – all of them destined for the jails of Jackson and Mississippi’s Parchman State Prison. By the end of August, more than 300 had come, three-fourths from the North, about half students, and over half of them white.”

Crucial to the Freedom Rides was James Farmer, who had advocated and practiced nonviolent action for civil rights since the early 1940s, as one of the founders of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Farmer’s recollections are edited from a speech given at a conference on “Civil Rights: The Unfinished Revolution,” held at the Kennedy Library in Boston in 1980.

JAMES FARMER

After the Irene Morgan case, in which the Supreme Court had ruled that segregated seating on buses used by interstate passengers is unconstitutional, nothing happened. The law was not enforced. The Supreme Court decision remained a scrap of paper. Then there was another decision in 1960, the Boyington case, in which the court ruled that segregation in the use of bus terminal facilities by interstate passengers is unconstitutional. But still nothing happened. It was a scrap of paper.

Letters poured across my desk at CORE from individuals complaining that they had tried to sit in the front of the bus or use the bus terminal facilities in the Deep South and were jailed or beaten or both. So what we decided to do was to force the federal government’s hand. The government was not going to enforce the Supreme Court ruling unless it became politically dangerous for the law not to be enforced.

Before the Freedom Rides, we wrote to the president, the vice president, the attorney general, the Department of Justice, the FBI, the Interstate Commerce Commission, Greyhound and Trailways corporations, and told them precisely what we were going to do. On May 1, we were going to have a ride with whites and blacks, starting in Washington, going through the Deep South, violating the Southern laws of segregation but supporting the Supreme Court. I don’t know whether you’d call that civil disobedience – we were disobeying the laws of a region but obeying the laws of the federal government. And on that ride the whites would sit in the

back of the bus and the blacks would sit in the front, and they would refuse to move when ordered to do so and would accept the consequences of their actions.

So we wrote to all the aforementioned persons. We got a reply from none of them. No reply at all. So we recruited 13 or so people and trained them in Washington, DC, for an intensive one-week training period. Most of them were young, but there were a couple of elderly people. The training consisted of having lawyers speak on what the legal situation was and what one’s legal rights were when arrested; having social scientists speak on what the customs and mores were and the extent to which the local communities would go to enforce those customs and traditions; having activists speak, and so forth. Then we engaged in role-playing, with some of the recruits playing the role of freedom riders sitting at a simulated lunch counter, others playing the role of hoodlums coming in to beat them up. By the time the week’s training was over, I felt that these people were ready for anything, including death. And they knew that death was a possibility.

We were hoping that, even though we’d received no letters, the FBI was going to protect us. That was a vain hope. We learned later that the FBI had gotten our itinerary, since we’d sent everything to them, all the letters, and they had passed on our itinerary to local police whom they knew to be active in the KKK. And for that reason, two of the freedom riders who were brutally beaten – Jim Peck and Walter Bergman – are now suing. Peck had 53 stitches taken in his head when he was left for dead in a pool of his own blood in the Birmingham bus

station. Bergman was so brutally beaten around the head that he had a stroke; he has been confined to a wheel chair ever since. And others were brutally beaten. One fellow had his back broken; fortunately, he was not paralyzed somehow. Another had his nose broken. A bus was burned to the ground, the people almost incinerated. Still, no action. No reply to any of the letters.

LUCRETIA COLLINS

One of the Nashville students who continued the Freedom Ride from Birmingham to Jackson was Lucretia Collins. A few weeks later, she sat down with James Forman and recorded her recollections, which he included in his book The Making of Black Revolutionaries.

I was silent most of the way from Nashville to Birmingham. We had planned not to identify ourselves with one another because our purpose was to get to Birmingham and not be stopped on the way. Certainly we would have been stopped if we had identified ourselves. This was proven by Paul Brooks, who sat by Jim Zwerg. He should not have done this, for that identified them. Sure enough, they were arrested within the city limits of Birmingham. Black and white just do not ride together in Alabama.

We remained on the bus after they were arrested. A policeman got on at this point, supposedly to escort us to the bus station in downtown Birmingham. I went to get off, but I was blocked. And I was blocked for quite some time.

Later, the chief of police came and he told us we were in danger of our lives and that he was placing us in protective custody. At this point, the policemen got very rough with us. It was like a moment of rejoicing to them, as if they had really won something by getting us to go to jail.

We got into the wagon, pleasantly. We went to jail. We sang all the way. It was a rugged ride to that jail; I think they tried to turn us upside down in the patrol wagon because they were turning curves very sharply. And

speeding. The patrol wagon caused quite a sensation as we were going through town. People were applauding. This gave us more determination.

In jail, I made as many friends as I could. There was a woman who had a severe speech defect and since that time, I have been reading about that kind of problem. This woman interested me in particular because the others made fun of her and mimicked her. This is very bad to me. I talked with her a long time.

The following night at 11:30 p.m., Bull Connor came into our cell and said that since we were from Nashville he was taking us in a car back to Nashville. We protested, but that did not do any good. I was pushed out of the cell and Katherine Burke, who refused to go, was carried out. The fellows were pushed and shoved out. During our ride to Ardmore, Tennessee, we made it very clear that we were not afraid of jail and that we were not afraid of being attacked on the road. The driver of our car said that he would kill his daughter before he would allow her to go to an integrated school.

When we got to the Tennessee state line at Ardmore, Bull Connor pointed to a train station and told us to catch a train from there. It was just breaking day. We saw a telephone booth on the corner and we called Diane. She asked what we were going to do and we said we would call her back. This was a gripping moment. We knew that anything could happen to us. We were

alone with our luggage and everything in the middle of the street. We did not know if there had been attackers following the so-called police car or if attackers would come at us from somewhere in Tennessee. We were 93 miles from Nashville and 193 miles from Birmingham.

Two fellows decided to see if they could find a Negro home. The two scouts came back in 10 minutes and we knew that they had found something. So we took our bags and walked down the railroad tracks. The people let us in and we called Nashville again. Leo Lillard, who was coordinator of the Freedom Ride, said he would come right away.

We felt we had to go back to Birmingham because if we went home to Nashville it would be exactly what they wanted us to do. They had put us out in the middle of the night to frighten us. We would lose another fight if we did not return to Birmingham. We knew the dangers we faced, going on the highway with Tennessee license plates.

Leo arrived — he drove those 93 miles in 55 minutes. We planned our trip back to Birmingham so that we would not look so conspicuous. One fellow was on the floor. The other three were slumped down in the back so that it would not look crowded. Katherine and I sat in front with Leo and Bill. I pretended that Bill and I

In Anniston, Alabama, the Freedom Riders' bus was burned. Spring, 1961.



Courtesy Schomburg Center/New York Public Library

were sweethearts. And I lay on his shoulder. Katherine lay on Leo's shoulder. In this way the car did not look so crowded.

Katherine was from Birmingham and she helped us find a way to bypass the city and get to Shuttlesworth's house. Several kids from Nashville and two from Atlanta were waiting for us there. Diane, who represented Nashville on the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, "Snick," had called other members, and we were happy to see Ruby Doris Smith, who had gone to jail in Rock Hill with Diane. There was this great, joyous reunion. We hardly had time to eat because we were so eager to get back

to the bus station.

At the station, they wouldn't let us on the bus. Some of the kids slept but I was determined not to go to sleep. I felt as if I had been without sleep for so long that it just didn't matter. I did not want people watching to think that we were so weary, because to me that brings the morale down.

We patronized the little fountain in the bus station. We walked around. Some of the kids played the games that were in the station. We just made ourselves at home in the "white" waiting room. We went to the bathroom at will. Except the fellows; they did not go to the bathroom whenever

they felt the need because there were a couple of men in the building who were subject to being very violent. And they would follow them into the bathroom.

During this time, we tried to catch every bus that left Birmingham. The bus drivers said they wouldn't drive if we got on board. They kept refusing us.

It just seemed that all the blood was drained from you or something. And we began to sing. I don't think that song — "We Shall Overcome" — ever had so much meaning as it did that morning. It was really felt that morning, after we had waited so long and been refused so much. Well, we

THE FIRST FREEDOM RIDE 1947

JIM PECK

"Was the Freedom Ride worth it? Would you do it again?"

These questions were tossed to me in 1961 as I lay on an operating table in Hillman Clinic, Birmingham, Alabama, waiting for the doctor to finish sewing 53 stitches in my face and head. To their surprise, I explained that this was not my first Freedom Ride, that I had been on a previous one in 1947.

The 1947 trip was not called "Freedom Ride," a term coined by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) for the 1961 bus trips. It was called the Journey of Reconciliation, co-sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation and CORE. It took place just a year after the first Supreme Court decision to outlaw segregation in interstate travel, the Irene Morgan case.

It was a particularly quiet, gray Sunday afternoon in Chapel Hill, and white cab drivers were hanging around the bus station with nothing to do. Then they saw our Trailways bus



On the 1961 Freedom Ride, Jim Peck was attacked by a mob in Birmingham.

delayed and learned the reason why. Here was something over which they could work out their frustration and boredom. Two ringleaders started haranguing the other drivers. About 10 of them started milling around the parked bus.

When I got off to put up bail for two Negroes and two whites in our group who had been arrested, five of the drivers surrounded me.

"Coming down here to stir up the niggers," snarled a big one with steel-cold gray eyes. With that he slugged me on the side of the head. I stepped back, looked at him and asked, "What's the matter?" He gave me a perplexed look and started to walk away awkwardly. My failure to retaliate with violence had taken him

by surprise. I have found that use of nonviolence in such situations often has this effect. As the driver walked away a passenger who was standing outside the bus shouted at him, "What's wrong with you? That man didn't do anything to you."

I later learned that the sentiment among passengers waiting aboard the bus was predominantly in our favor. A woman from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, spoke up for us in a discussion of the incident among the passengers — and even gave one of our observers her name and address in case we should want her to testify in court. Another white passenger

had a little worship right there. A young man prayed. We read scripture. It was unlike any of the other devotional periods we had had. And I saw kids that I knew were not really dedicated before. At this point you could see it come out. I was just filled with mixed emotions.

The next bus, the next bus, we caught. It was a very strange thing – we stood there and we prayed and we sang. And it was so meaningful. And the next bus we caught. It was seven a.m.

On the ride from Birmingham to Montgomery, I was very relaxed. I dozed off. When I awoke in Montgomery, I felt something was wrong.

There was no mob, but I felt apprehensive. Then I looked around and saw no policemen whatsoever. We were the last people to get off the bus. The other Freedom Riders had walked down a little to the left on the platform. I saw Katherine and John Lewis being televised by NBC. At that point, this very nice man from *Life* was standing in front of eight people by the door. While Katherine and John were talking to the television man, I saw this *Life* reporter sort of spread his arms out as if to keep those eight people back. I think he must have felt something was wrong and he was really holding up the action that the crowd of eight wanted to take against

us.

When we noticed that this crowd was moving toward us, I think John Lewis said, "Let's all stand together." A man with a cigar began to beat the NBC cameraman. A crowd started to gather. We were ignored at first and I noticed that there were no cabs or cars to pick us up. The crowd knocked the cameraman down and he dropped his camera. One man took it and smashed it on the ground. He picked it up and threw it down again and it fell into many pieces. I saw the cameraman moving down the street. The mob was after him. Then some of them noticed us. Two cabs came by. The driver of one said that the best thing was for

got off the bus, went into the station, and protested to the driver against his ordering the arrests.

When the four who were arrested were bailed out and left the courthouse in Reverend Charles Jones' car, 12 of the drivers piled into three cabs and sped after us. We succeeded in getting to Reverend Jones' home before them. When we got inside and looked out of the window, we saw two of the drivers getting out with big sticks. Others started to pick up rocks by the roadside. Then two of the drivers, apparently scared, motioned to the others to stop.

They drove away. But a few minutes later Reverend Jones, who since the CIO meeting in his church had been marked as a "nigger lover," received an anonymous phone call. "Get the niggers out of town by nightfall or we'll burn down your house," threatened a quivering voice.

That night we had a meeting scheduled in Greensboro – about 50 miles away. The only bus which would get us there in time had left. We remained in Reverend Jones' house, standing watch at the windows, while he rounded up three university students with cars who would drive us to Greensboro.

The three cars drove us directly to Shiloh Baptist Church in Greensboro, where the meeting was held. The church was crowded to capacity, and an atmosphere of excitement prevailed. Word had spread about what had happened to us and why we were late. All 18 of us sat behind the pulpit. After the usual invocation, hymn-

singing, scripture-reading and prayer, Bayard Rustin, who is a particularly talented speaker, told our story. He interrupted it only to get one or another of us to rise and tell about a specific incident or experience. Then he continued. When he finished, the people in the crowded church came forward to shake hands and congratulate us. A number of the women had tears in their eyes. A few shook my hand more than once. As at almost all our meetings, there were not more than two or three whites in the audience.

Later, about to leave Asheville for Knoxville, Tennessee, I was arrested for the second time on the journey. No sooner had Dennis Banks, a Negro musician from Chicago, and I taken seats near the front of a Trailways bus, than the driver asked us to move. We refused, and within minutes police boarded the bus and arrested us.

In the courtroom where we were tried, I saw the most fantastic extreme of segregation in my experience – Jim Crow Bibles. Along the page edges of one Bible had been printed in large letters the word "white." Along the page edges of the other Bible was the word "colored." When a white person swore in, he simply raised his right hand while the clerk held the white Bible. When a Negro swore in, he had to raise his right hand while holding the colored Bible in his left hand. The white clerk could not touch the colored Bible.

Our case was over in a few minutes. Judge Cathey turned to the district attorney and asked, "Is 30 days the

maximum sentence under the state law?" When the district attorney confirmed this, the judge said, "Then it is 30 days under supervision of the State Highway Commission." It was a polite way of saying 30 days on the road gang. He then made a little speech which started, "We pride ourselves on our race relations here."

It was several hours before Banks and I were released on bail. We never had to serve our 30 days on the road gang. When our attorney filed appeal papers, the state dropped the case, apparently aware that it would not hold up on appeal. We lost only one of the five arrest cases arising from the trip. As a consequence of that case, Bayard Rustin, Igal Roodenko and Joe Felmet served 30 days on the road gang. □

*Jim Peck is a former staffer for CORE, and now works for Amnesty International. He is currently active in demonstrations against draft registration. Following the recent testimony of Gary Rowe, Jr., undercover agent for the FBI in the Klan (and one of the men accused of assaulting Peck in Birmingham in 1961), Peck filed a \$500,000 lawsuit against the FBI. The suit is based on Rowe's testimony that the FBI and police chief "Bull" Connor agreed that the police would be absent for 15 minutes after the arrival of the Freedom Riders to leave Klansmen time to clobber the demonstrators. During the melee in which Rowe took part, Jim Peck and Walter Bergman were severely beaten. This account is excerpted from Peck's 1962 book, *Freedom Ride*, published by Simon & Schuster.*

the girls to leave. There were five Negro girls and two white girls. Four of us jumped into the cab. The cabdriver, a Negro, said, "Well, I can't carry but four." He had a little boy with him. At this point someone pulled the fifth girl down in the cab. The two white girls were still standing outside. "Well, I sure can't carry them," he said. But there was another cab next to us so we told them, "Get in right away." They went in the cab. Some white fellow opened the door and pulled the driver out. I don't think they attacked him in any way, I'm not sure. But anyway, they pulled him out and prohibited him from driving the cab.

At this point, our driver decided to pull off. There were two exits. We went to the exit facing us. There was a crowd coming in this exit. We saw that either we would have to drive over the people or get out of the cab. So we decided it would be best to back up and try the other exit. At the other exit, we were blocked by cars. The driver was really frightened. He told us he was going to get out of his cab and leave us there.

Blocked in by the cars, we looked back. The mob had attacked the fellows. I saw Jim Zwerg being beaten brutally! Some men held him while white women clawed his face with their nails. And they held up their little children — children who couldn't have been more than a couple of years old — to claw his face.

I had to turn my head because I just couldn't watch it.

Finally, our driver, perhaps because we had calmed him down a bit, agreed to stay with the cab. Although we were nervous, frightened and did not know what to expect, we weren't screaming.

We managed to drive out of the parking lot. Then the car began to give us a lot of trouble. We thought the best thing to do would be to find a Negro home. Any Negro home. This little boy in the cab saved the day. He helped us find a Negro home. The car broke down twice. After the second time it broke down, we managed to get to the Negro neighborhood in second gear.

When we got there, Katherine ran into the house. We got out and told the lady what happened. So they welcomed us. They were very warm. Katherine called Reverend Shuttlesworth in Birmingham and she told him

what had happened. Then she called some of the people whom he told us to contact in Montgomery. A very nice lady, who I think was a fighter for civil rights, lived around the block. She asked us to her house. We went and listened to the news reports. And of course the report was very biased.

After this, we went to another woman's house for late breakfast. I think all of us found difficulty in trying to eat. We were still listening to the radio for the outcome of the violence. We heard that the mob had swelled. Other people were being attacked besides the Freedom Riders. Kennedy's assistant, Siegenthaler, had been hurt and was suffering from a minor brain concussion. We ate. Somehow we managed to eat.

The next day, Sunday, we were to meet at the First Baptist Church. We found out that there were federal marshals in the city and we were being guarded. The city policemen watched us carefully as we moved from one destination to another. A mass meeting in our honor was scheduled for that night, with Martin Luther King as the main speaker. We managed to assemble and spent most of the day in the library of the First Baptist Church, wondering if they would arrest us there.

The time came for the mass meeting. We were introduced as the Freedom Riders. They gave us much applause. The people were very warm. There was an all-out welcome.

We were being televised by most of the networks, NBC, CBS, ABC. There was Associated Press, United Press International, and then the local reporters. Several speakers sat up on the platform: Martin Luther King, Jr., Reverend Shuttlesworth, Jim Farmer of CORE, Reverend Abernathy, Reverend Walker, Diane Nash and others. Reverend King was going to give the main address of the evening.

Before the address, we received word that a very large mob had assembled outside. Later, we got word that a group of blacks had assembled also. King, with several other ministers, went out and was successful in getting the group to disperse. Then one of the federal marshal's cars was set on fire and the white mob began to stone the marshals.

The Negroes did disperse, I think, but the white mob remained. They began to throw tear gas canisters. The atmosphere in the church filled with

this gaseous, suffocating smell. I couldn't help but think how wonderfully Reverend Seay was directing the people. He told them not to panic, not to become hysterical in any way. The gas was choking many people, but they followed him beautifully. We were large in number, very large. The church was overcrowded and the tear gas made it difficult to breathe. People's eyes began to run and they began wiping them.

We sang. We prayed. We were told not to open the windows. Many of these people had been in the Montgomery bus boycott and they knew from experience what it was for people to try to intimidate them. But the desire for freedom was so strong throughout the group that nothing, nothing the mob could do, would stop us in any way.

We learned that Governor Patterson had ordered out the National Guard. Soon the church was surrounded with National Guardsmen. The mob still had not dispersed completely. Then we were told that we were to remain in the church overnight for our protection, for our own protection.

Here we were, a group of peaceable people trying to assemble, to exercise a right which our Constitution guaranteed us.

We decided to make the most of the situation. We sang and the fellowship grew stronger and stronger, person to person to person. All the Freedom Riders had been without food all day. We had sent for sandwiches, but the mob had checked our possibility of getting them. People grew weary, some irritable. Still they managed to discipline themselves. About this time, King gave his main address. It gave even more encouragement.

Eventually, very early in the morning, most of the people were taken home in large Army trucks.

From Montgomery we went to Jackson. I was elected a spokeswoman. Most of the kids, wherever they came from, tended to put the students from Nashville on a pedestal almost. Perhaps it is because we had been very successful. We made no bones about it. We were so willing to give everything, including our lives.

There was a lot of tension on the ride to Jackson. We didn't know what would happen when we got to the Mississippi line. Whether they were going to implement federal and

Alabama state "protection" or turn us over to the Mississippi state police. We didn't know.

They said they would arrest us. They did. They followed us, literally followed us, through the bus station and into the white waiting room. We were arrested and taken to the Jackson city jail. We went to trial. We were found guilty. Disturbing the peace, trespassing. That's about it.

After my sentencing, I only stayed in jail for 30 hours. I had asked to be bailed out if we were arrested; I wanted to go to my graduation. Not to march down the aisle, but I thought my degree would not be conferred and I wanted to be there to see. I was going to march in the procession. I wanted them to pull me out of line if they were not going to give me my degree.

I later learned that the school had planned not to confer my degree on me. I also learned that our classmates had planned to walk out if they did not let me graduate. Perhaps because of this, I got the degree.

I want to go back to Jackson because I feel that I have left a job undone. I feel that sometimes one should stay in jail with no bail and

sometimes one is more effective if he comes out of jail. I felt I would be more effective by accepting bail. But I feel incomplete. The Freedom Ride – I am willing to do it all over again because I know a new world is opening up. To me, the entire Movement is symbolic of the fight for human dignity. □

FARMER

Finally, when we reached Montgomery, Alabama, we got a wire from the attorney general asking us to halt the Rides and have a cooling-off period. Well, we discussed it, and the reply which the riders agreed upon was, "We've been cooling off for 300 years. If we cool off any more, we're in a deep freeze. The Rides will go on." We still had not created the crisis, though that burning bus was in headlines throughout the country, if not the

world. It became the symbol of the Freedom Rides, the burning bus superimposed upon the photograph of the Statue of Liberty and the torch. The rides went on into Mississippi after a riot in Montgomery, a white riot where we were held in a church overnight under siege.

Bobby Kennedy acted then. He had been forced to act. This was headlined all over the world. He sent U.S. marshals, a large number of them, into Montgomery. He of course had gotten on the phone before then, called there and said "Get that bus moving." No driver would drive the bus. He said, "Where's Mr. Greyhound? Can't he drive a bus?"

Now this was only because the pressure had been built up. We filled up the jails of Mississippi. First the local jails in Jackson, the county jails, and then they sent us all to the state penitentiary at Parchman. We filled up the maximum-security unit. Bobby Kennedy finally acted, since he knew that we were not going to stop. On every bus that went into Jackson, Mississippi, there were more Freedom Riders. These were not only CORE, there were SNCC people, and there were other people unrelated to any organization, who were volunteering, saying, "Send me, I'll go, send me, I'll go," even though they knew that it might be the end of their days.

So Bobby then acted. The strategy worked. He called upon the ICC to issue an executive order, to issue an order with teeth in it which he could enforce. And the order was issued that as of a certain date the "For Colored" and "For White" signs must come down on all the buses and in all terminals used by interstate passengers and must be replaced with signs saying "Racial segregation in the use of these facilities is unconstitutional," and be signed by the attorney general and the head of the ICC. And we notified the attorney general that on the day after the effective date of this order, we were going to send test teams throughout the South, of white and black, not riding, not freedom-riding, just testing the enforcement. And if they found that it was being enforced, great. If it were not being enforced, then the Freedom Rides would resume the following day. They were being enforced. But we felt that we had to keep that kind of pressure on them to get the action taken. □



Courtesy Schomburg Center/New York Public Library

Mississippi roused its lawyers on December 20, 1961, and sent them to fight a symbol of the "plague."

Mrs. Birdie Keglär is black and as every symbol ought to be, overpowering. Mrs. Keglär, rooted in Tallahatchie County, the heart of the Mississippi Black Belt, swept into a storm when she decided to pay her poll tax. None of the 6,482 Negroes of voting age are registered in Tallahatchie County, though an estimated 4,300 of 5,099 voting-age whites are registered to vote. After trying unsuccessfully for two years to pay her poll tax, Mrs. Keglär filed suit against the sheriff. The Justice Department provided her with counsel.

It was Monday night, December 18, and Mrs. Keglär was excited and tense about her forthcoming trial. She had neither been approached nor reproached by any white people in

town, but there had been whisperings. Negroes had told her what some of the white people were thinking, and there had been stares.

She wondered whether the other Negroes of voting age would try to pay their poll tax, whether her son would be fired because of her efforts. She wasn't organizing her county, or encouraging others to pay their poll tax, she had just decided to pay hers. This was enough for her to do; it was almost too much.

The next night, Tuesday, December 19, James Whitten, representative from the second congressional district of Mississippi, spoke before a joint meeting of civic clubs in Natchez, Mississippi. The second district, with 50 percent of its citizens Negroes, includes Tallahatchie County. Mr. Whitten said:

The first consideration in Mississippi should be that of retaining control in stable and conservative people to the fullest extent

possible. . . . Under present dictates of the U.S. Supreme Court, unless attention is given to this problem, the balance and control in a number of areas will pass to an unstable and untrained group.

In the courtroom, Mrs. Keglär, on stage now, was fumbling with her pocketbook. A sign of fatigue. She had been on the stand for over a half hour. Douglas Shands, squad leader for Mississippi, had been sand-bagging her, swooshing at her with a heavy tongue; she had a right to be tired.

"Birdie!" Shands was "addressing" her. "Did you know that a poll tax receipt was waiting for you at Sheriff Bogan's office?"

"Why no. . . . I did not."

I looked for scorn, sarcasm, a touch of bitterness in her voice; there was only relief, surprise, a touch of gratitude.

— Bob Moses, 1962

MISSISSIPPI MOVEMENT

The Mississippi Movement burst into the nation's attention when three young civil-rights workers were murdered at the beginning of the summer of 1964, the Mississippi Freedom Summer. But organizing had been going on in the state for several years under the leadership of the NAACP, CORE and SNCC.

Bob Moses, who directed SNCC's Mississippi Project, had come to Mississippi in 1960 to recruit students for the second SNCC conference. There he met Amzie Moore, an activist who introduced him to other Mississippi freedom fighters. Moses returned to the South early in the summer of 1961 and began quietly working, laying the foundations for the many other activists who would eventually follow, working through SNCC and other organizations. Their style was to move into communities, to live among the people and become a part of community life.

At the same time, the Kennedy administration, aware that the Freedom Rides had tarnished the nation's image abroad, began to encourage young civil-rights workers, especially through the office of the president's brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy. Robert Kennedy urged the workers to concentrate on voter registration, which would both give Southern blacks power in elections and provide loyal Kennedy voters for future elections. Added reinforcement came from private foundations which, with Robert Kennedy's help, offered large sums of money

for voter registration drives.

But many students who had been involved in the Freedom Rides and other direct actions felt that voter registration was a tame operation that would siphon off their energy. Others felt that only through the vote would the real changes be made. Still others argued that voter registration and direct action would go hand in glove. The latter were proved right.

Bob Moses was busy working in what many felt was the most repressive state — Mississippi. It was in Mississippi that Emmett Till and Charles Mack Parker had been brutally murdered by white terrorists and dumped into the Mississippi River. In Mississippi, the student sit-in demonstrators met perhaps the fiercest resistance of the white mobs. Here the Freedom Riders experienced Parchman State Prison's medieval conditions at first hand.

In 1964, prodded by Moses, several groups under the umbrella organization of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) decided to invite students — white and black — from all over the country to participate in a summer organizing project in Mississippi. Ella Jo Baker, "the godmother of SNCC," reflects here on some of the steps leading up to that decision. Baker had served as the director of branches of the NAACP and as executive director of SCLC, and helped found both SCLC and SNCC.

ELLA JO BAKER

SNCC, in its early stages, began to face up to the need for political participation as well as voter registration. So in the first thrust it made into the hard-core Black Belt areas, there was a conviction to organize people for their own leadership rather than getting them mobilized to be dependent on some extraneous, or outside, or imported leadership. This became the basis of SNCC's philosophy for really trying to organize people.

Out of the experiences and resistance they had in Mississippi — for instance, just a simple effort to register and vote — they decided a much more massive effort was required, which led to the freedom vote in '63 when the Reverend Ed King of Tougaloo and Dr. Aaron Henry were projected — Dr. Henry as governor and Ed King as lieutenant governor — with what was called a mock election. They tried to set up in barber shops and so forth a place where people could register. What was this doing? This was giving the lie to the old idea that a great deal of the reason why Negroes weren't registering was because they weren't interested in registering. But they came in thousands and they collected 85,000 (or whatever it was) registrations in this mock election. So this produced other confrontations. It just led them more and more into a realization of how limited the results were from the efforts.

Also, those who were fearful of losing the nonviolent, direct-action technique were brought to realize that the moment you went in to organize people on the basis that they were talking about — politically — you produced a confrontation with the power structure and the next step was the use of mass demonstrations.

You had it in Selma, Alabama. You had that in Albany, Georgia. Then in Mississippi the tremendous resistance that developed led us into a further evaluation of political action. A great part of why we were having difficulty in Mississippi and elsewhere was because the rest of the country had tacitly agreed to the patterns of racial repression that existed in the South. So how do you involve the rest of the country?

There were two steps taken. The SNCC kids didn't just arrive at this.

Fortunately, there were people who helped them arrive at it over time. First, they raised the question of the responsibility of the federal government, they began to address themselves to the federal government for remedial action. Then there was the other concept, that of involving the rest of the country. The Mississippi

Part of the massive search for three missing civil-rights workers. Philadelphia, Miss., 1964.

Summer of 1964 was a conscious political effort based on the rather simple premise that when Ted Jones, a black boy in Mississippi, got killed, he was just a black boy who got killed or beaten up. A lot of these black kids who had gone down to work had already gotten beat up. But if the son of the congressman from California was beaten up, it made a difference.

See, by that time there was pressure on the part of the white students to





Courtesy SCLC

be involved; they had come down. Some had given up schooling to come and join the SNCC group, on a small scale, a limited scale. But the conscious effort to create the Mississippi Summer with the involvement of hundreds of white students from the North was predicated upon the idea that the rest of the country had a responsibility for what was happening in Mississippi and the South. And the best way to confront the rest of the country was to involve the white students, the sons and daughters of the leadership and the power structure.

Step by step SNCC made certain efforts. They tried to work within the system. They tried to go through the channel of voter registration, which ought to have been a very easy road, but they got all kinds of physical reprisals as a result of it. So they were driven more and more into a realization that something different had to take place.

Staff and volunteers in Jackson map plans for Freedom Summer in June, 1964.

FREEDOM SCHOOLS

The murders in Neshoba County in June, 1964, of James Chaney, black, and Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, both white, were intended to discourage others from joining the Summer Project; instead they helped to fuel the fires for an intense and diverse struggle for freedom. The Project went on, with some protection from the federal government brought on by the publicity surrounding the

murders, to include far more than voter registration. Out of that summer came the Free Southern Theatre, which continues to provide inspiration today. A "White Folks" project grew out of the conviction that organizing Mississippi meant organizing in both white and black communities. The summer also gave rise to the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, which challenged the traditional Democratic Party of Mississippi at the 1964 Democratic National Convention. And the freedom schools, which originally fed into the voter registration drives, had a life of their own, as Len Holt describes in this essay from 1965.

LEN HOLT

Bluntly the teachers had been told that they had about eight weeks to develop those leaders needed and that there'd be no need to search for them; every morning when they said "hello," the leadership potential would be standing there before them. The need was for revolutionary leaders, and attending the freedom schools was an act of defiance in Mississippi, a state where defiance, traditionally, is revolutionary.

The teachers-to-be had been told that most of their students would be from the "block," the "outs" who were not part of the Negro middle class of Mississippi (which is composed primarily of teachers); and that

knowledge abounds in the Negro communities about the subtle forms of ignorance and subservience to the state of Mississippi inflicted in the regular public schools.

From a single-spaced, eight-page, legal-size document headed "Notes on Teaching in Mississippi," the same theme had been pushed over and over again: "The purpose of the freedom schools is to help them begin to question." This was the guideline asserted by Jane Stembridge (SNCC's executive secretary in 1961), who also sought to answer for the teachers this question: what will the students demand of you?

The answer was this: "They will demand you be honest. Honesty is an attitude toward life which is communicated by everything you do.

Since you, too, will be in the learning situation — honesty means you will *ask* questions as well as answer them. It means that if you don't know something, you will say so. It means that you will not 'act' a part in the attempt to compensate for all they've endured in Mississippi. You can't compensate for that, and they don't want you to try. It would not be *real*, and the greatest contribution that you can make to them is to be real."

Charley Cobb was the mother-father of the idea of having freedom schools as part of the Mississippi Summer Project. Charley was a SNCC field secretary who had postponed for another year the pursuit of his own college career at Howard University, where his talents as a gifted creative writer were being polished. He present-

ed the idea of freedom schools to one of the early planning conferences of the Freedom Summer. With the characteristic calm and quiet persistence of those like him who have found internal security in their personal lives by giving them meaning and direction, Charley pushed the idea.

Mendy Julius Samstein, another SNCC field secretary, had contributed to the freedom-school notes by detailing some of the problems of freedom-school training. His suggestion had focused on the facts of facilities for the schools: they would all be *scrounged*, "and if you are white, you will almost certainly be the first white civil-rights workers to come to town to stay. You will need to deal with the problem of your novelty as well as with the educational challenge."

The words had been given.

Frightened of life, death, the students, themselves, and every other matter that they could crowd into their concern in the short space allotted between their arrival and the beginning of the schools' tensions, the teachers began their tasks.

It was a hot morning in early July when the freedom schools, the *temple of questions*, opened.

That date — July 7, 1964 — will be cursed by the power structure of Mississippi and celebrated by the lovers of human dignity as the point of the beginning of the end — the end and the downfall of the empire of Mississippi, the political subdivision, the state that exhibits best the worst found anywhere in America.

As the overly scrubbed, intensely alert and eager students poured into the churches, lodge halls, storefronts, sheds and open fields that served as school facilities, both teachers and students trembled with the excitement of one taking his first trip to the moon. From the beginning, the schools were a challenge to the insistent principle that everyone had talked about so much: flexibility.

Where the initial plans had been for only the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades, one found sitting in the informal circles youngsters with the smooth black faces and wondering eyes of the impish ages of nine and 10 who were mere fifth-graders. Flexibility. And there just behind teen-age boys — with slender, cotton-picking muscles — were sets of gnarled hands and the carechiseled faces of grandmothers, some

of whom said they thought they were in the seventies (birth records for the old are almost nonexistent). Flexibility.

Where Tom Wahman and Staughton Lynd had thought that there would be only 20 or so schools to be planned for, 50 of them had sprouted before the end of the summer. Where a mere 1,000 students had been hoped for, 3,000 eventually came.

To meet all these changes and challenges, flexibility became the rigid rule. While those in charge of coordination and administration worked to resolve the logistical problems of swollen enrollments, the tasks of education proceeded in the first 23 schools to be opened, which were

scattered throughout the state in 19 communities: Columbus, West Point, Holly Springs, Greenwood, Holmes County, Ruleville, Bolivar County, Greenville, Clarksdale, Vicksburg, Canton, Madison County, Carthage, Meridian, Hattiesburg, Pascagoula, Moss Point, Gulfport and Laurel.

Happily, the concern about the ability of the rural Negro communities to accept the white teachers readily was a wasted concern. After a day or so and a few touches of the white skin and blond tresses, the white teachers ceased to be "white" in a Mississippi

Unpacking and settling down at civil-rights headquarters in Greenwood.

Shel Hershorn/Black Star





State Historical Society of Wisconsin

sense. The first-name basis between students and teachers, the obvious sincerity, and the informality of the classroom situation all contributed to the breaking of any barriers that existed and enhanced the learning situation: if there were chairs, they were arranged in circles rather than rows; no one was required to participate in any classroom activity while in class; to go to the toilet or out-house, one did not need to raise a hand to get permission; not disturbing others was the only consideration requested of the students.

And, most important of all, the teachers asked the students questions

Freedom School class.

and the students talked; the students could and did say what they thought to be important, and no idea was ridiculed or forbidden — an immeasurably traumatic joy for the souls of young black folk.

The freedom schools were — and are — a collection of institutions to train leaders, and for that reason approximately half of the average of nine hours spent daily in school was utilized in a *direct* approach to develop Mississippi leaders.

Serving as the basic teaching material for leadership was the *Cur-*

riculum Guide for Freedom Schools, by Noel Day. Out of the need for training material for students attending classes in Boston churches and lodge halls during the boycotts against Boston's token integration, Day had prepared a curriculum; with appropriate adaptation and revision, this Boston curriculum became the bible for leadership training in Mississippi. This curriculum, in mimeographed form, was divided into seven units:

- Comparison of the student's reality with that of others (the way the students and the way others live).
- North to Freedom? (The Negro in the North.)
- Examining the apparent reality (the "better lives" that whites lead).
- Introducing the power structure.
- The poor Negro and the poor white.
- Material things versus soul things.
- The Movement.

Interwoven into Noel Day's freedom-school curriculum were extensive reading and discussion of Negro history and hundreds of questions along the margins for the teachers to ask.

But there were problems. The freedom-school teachers — mostly Northerners themselves — on one hand were well equipped to describe the ghetto life of Northern Negroes; on the other hand these same teachers had stirred the alert and eager minds in the black bodies to challenge, to think and to question. These students knew well that this was a *Summer Project*, that come the fall the teachers would hop on the Illinois Central (freedom train) and ride in style across the Ohio River (the Red Sea) to the Promised Land.

In the learning situation the teachers did not coddle or protect the students from facts. For their own comfort, the teachers taught too well or the students learned too much. One student bore into the heart of his teacher: "I believe what you have been trying to say. This is our land. It's worth staying and fighting for. I'm gonna be here when those leaves over yonder are gold. If you believe what you're teaching, where should you be?"

The prison walls crumbled a little more.

The black giant was stirring.

Almost always there was the push of the students into fields where they could be creative. Where there was a mimeograph machine, weekly newspapers were written, typed and published by the students. Where there was a record player or some musical instrument to be played, assignments were given to describe the sounds in words and even to compose songs and words. Rorschach-like colors were splashed on large sheets of paper to be described from the students' experiences. Class organization was encouraged, with presidents and sub-officers to carry out functions within the class and to teach the fundamentals of parliamentary procedures.

Poems were read, such as Langston Hughes' "Blues":

*When the shoestrings break
On both of your shoes
And you're in a hurry –
That's the blues.*

To these poems and others by Frost, Gertrude Stein and e.e. cummings, the students were asked to respond by writing their own poems, which on some occasions created anguishing but vital opportunities for self-exploration. The class situation in Harmony, Mississippi, where Allen Gould, 20, of Detroit, Michigan, a student at Wayne State University, used

this device, provides an example.

The Negroes of Harmony are a closely knit, fiercely proud group with an above-average number of persons in their midst who own small tracts of land, from which they eke out a living growing cotton and beef cattle. Some 12 miles away is Neshoba County.

Several students read their poems – one was about household chores; another told about the first time the poet had heard the word "freedom" – and for their originality and ideas the poems received the reward of applause from the class.

Then Ida Ruth Griffin, 13, unlike those before her, decided that she would stand and read her poem. The sun shone on her soft brown face, causing it to glisten. Her eyes sparkled with a deep fire as her voice came forth melodiously and with just a slight dramatic tinge; she read in a slow cadence:

*I am Mississippi-fed,
I am Mississippi-bred,
Nothing but a poor, black boy.*

*I am a Mississippi slave,
I shall be buried in a Mississippi
grave,
Nothing but a poor, dead boy.*

The rustle of the leaves hushed and the blades of grass appeared to be straining to hear.

She finished.

There was silence, a silence that lingered. The eager young faces grew sullen and flushed with anger as if somehow a scab had been ripped from an old sore or Ida Ruth's poetry had betrayed all that they were learning of denying the myths of Negro inferiority.

On the silence lingered until the floodgates of scorn poured forth from others in the class. In an angry chorus they responded with fierce refutations: "We're not black slaves!"

The teacher, Gould, felt the compelling urge to speak in an effort to save this brown, beautiful and unknown young bard from more verbal attacks, but his tongue was stilled. All along the desire had been to encourage the students to think and to express those thoughts, and expressing opinions often includes speaking opinions other than what a teacher might think.

"She's right," spoke another student, a tall reedy girl with a sharp mind. "We certainly are. Can your poppa vote? Can mine? Can our folks eat anywhere they want to?"

Silence engulfed the class again momentarily, and then everyone began a cacophony of talking and thinking aloud, scattering ideas.

Gould's chest filled with the joy of seeing the sun rising in alert minds that were heretofore damned by the oppression of conformity.

The black giant had stirred some more.

MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM DEMOCRATIC PARTY

One of the many leaders of the struggle in Mississippi was Fannie Lou Hamer. A black Mississippian, she resided in Ruleville, in Sunflower County, her entire life. She worked at a plantation for 18 years before being fired for her activities in the Freedom Movement. At that time, she became a SNCC field secretary. In 1964, she ran for Congress and was vice-chairperson of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegation to the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City.

The regular Mississippi State Democratic Convention was held on July 28, and resolved: "We believe the Southern white man is the truest friend the Negro ever had; we believe in separation of the races in all phases of life."

A week later, 300 people from all over Mississippi attended the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party's state convention in Jackson. Unlike the regular state party, the MFDP pledged their support to the national party, and because of their loyalty, they were convinced they would be allowed to represent Mississippi at the Democratic



National Convention. They elected 68 delegates and alternates from their number to travel to Atlantic City, with Aaron Henry as chairperson of the delegation and Fannie Lou Hamer as vice-chairperson.

The MFDP delegates arrived in Atlantic City on Friday, August 21. They immediately began the task of contacting members of the Credentials Committee, urging them to vote to unseat the regular delegation, but it became clear early in the Committee proceedings that this would be a difficult task. Many MFDP supporters felt that if the issue could get on the floor of the convention, where the national television audience could hear the debate and see how their delegations voted, there would be enough pressure to seat the MFDP.

The turning point of the convention was the MFDP testimony before the Credentials Committee on Saturday afternoon. Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer gave the most moving testimony. She recounted her experiences in attempting to register and of being beaten in Winona, Mississippi, in 1963.

The strength of the MFDP created conflicts for Lyndon Johnson, who virtually controlled the convention but feared a walkout by the entire South if the Freedom Delegation were seated. He assigned Hubert Humphrey, a leader of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, the job of defeating the Freedom Delegation.

Besides putting intense pressure on members of the Credentials Committee to reject the MFDP cause, the president offered a compromise: the MFDP could have two at-large seats, with the delegates selected by the president, and a pledge from the National Democratic Party never to seat a lily-white delegation again, beginning in 1968.

The regular Mississippi delegation would be seated after taking a loyalty oath.

Tuesday was the crucial day. With the Credentials Committee scheduled to meet at two p.m., the MFDP caucused at 10 a.m. Bob Moses asked the delegation if they would accept the seating of just two delegates. Led by Fannie Lou Hamer, they voted almost unanimously to reject the compromise, although Aaron Henry, who would have been one of the delegates, supported it.

Though the compromise was portrayed by much of the press as a symbolic victory for the MFDP, the Freedom delegation, representing thousands of disfranchised black Mississippians, felt the acceptance of two at-large seats, occupied by hand-picked delegates, represented useless token desegregation. The Freedom Party delegates came to Atlantic City asking to be part of the national Democratic Party. Their challenge rested on the legal and moral grounds of exclusion, that they were forcibly restrained from taking part in the Democratic Party in their own state. The fact that the regular delegation from Mississippi would be allowed to occupy the Mississippi section and cast a full state vote was a total rejection of the MFDP's demands, not a compromise.

In discussing the president's compromise, Ed King, who would have been the other hand-picked delegate, said he told Humphrey at the convention, "I'm sure Mrs. Hamer has to be part of it." According to King, Humphrey replied, "The president has said that he will not let that illiterate woman on the floor of the Democratic convention."

Hamer, who died in 1977, gave her view of some of the events at the convention and in Mississippi during an interview conducted by Anne Romaine in 1966.



FANNIE LOU HAMER

When we went to Atlantic City, we didn't go there for publicity, we went there because we believed that America was what it said it was, "the land of the free." And I thought with all of my heart that the people would have been unseated in Atlantic City. And I believed that, because if the Constitution of this United States means something to all of us, then I knew they would unseat them. So we went to Atlantic City with all of this hope.

I never will forget the experience. One day I was going in the hall and Roy Wilkins [then executive secretary of the NAACP] said, "Mrs. Hamer, you people have put your point across. You don't know anything, you're ignorant, you don't know anything about politics. I've been in the business over 20 years. You people have put your point across, now why don't you pack up and go home?" That was blow number one.

And then I talked at one time with who is now the vice-president of the United States. All that we had been hearing about Hubert Humphrey and his stand for civil rights, I was delighted even to have a chance to talk with this man. But here sat a little round-eyed man with his eyes full of tears, when our attorney at the time, Joseph Rauh, said if we didn't stop pushing like we was pushing them and fighting to come to the floor, that Mr. Humphrey wouldn't be nominated that night for vice-president of the United States. I was amazed, and I said, "Well, Mr. Humphrey, do you mean to tell me that your position is more important to you than 400,000 black lives?" And I didn't try to force nobody else to say it, but I told him I wouldn't stoop to no two votes at large.

This was blows to me, really blows, and I left there full of tears. You see, for year after year, for the past 300 years, all that we have ever got was a compromise, you know. They said 100 years ago we were free, but today people are being beaten, people are being shot down, people are still begging for the same chance that they were begging for 100 years ago. In fact, it's worse now than it was 100 years ago.

I was very close to Dr. Henry, and I remember one time he met me in the hall and he said, "Mrs. Hamer,



Bob Anaslavage/Southern Patriot

we going to have to listen to some of them that know much more about politics than we know. And we going to have to listen to them." And I said, "Tell me what leaders you talking about." And he said, "You know we got great leaders." I said, "That's right, because all those people from SNCC are some of the greatest leaders I ever seen. But now don't go telling me about anybody that ain't been in Mississippi two weeks and don't know nothing about the problem, because they're not leading us." And that's the truth.

The reason I respect SNCC now is it was the only organization that did the hard work that had to be done in Mississippi. I went to them one time because I got so upset, I might be just, you know, just too full out. So I went to Bob [Moses], I went to Jim Forman, I went to Ella Baker, and I said, "Why don't you tell me something. I believe I'm right, but I might be wrong. I respect you, and I will respect your decision. Whatever you say, if you think I'm wrong, even though I felt like I was right, I would

have done it."

They told me, I'll never forget this, everyone would say almost the same thing, they'd say, "Now look, Mrs. Hamer, you're the people living in Mississippi, and you people know what you've experienced in Mississippi, we don't have to tell you nothing, you make your own decision." See, we'd never been allowed to do that before. Cause you see, if we are free people as Negroes, if we are free, then I don't think you're supposed to tell me how much of my freedom I'm supposed to have. Because we're human beings, too. You see there just is a difference in our colors.

In Mississippi, there's no more time for white people choosing the leader, hand-picking the leader that's going to lead me, cause we ain't going to follow. They might kill us, but you ain't going to pick this white owl over there for me, when I know everything she going to say when she get in front of that white man, "Yes sir, yes sir." We're getting sick of this. We want somebody that's going to say, "Well, now this is wrong, let's

talk about doing something this way.” And that’s what we been fussing about.

A few of the Mississippi delegation favored the compromise and wanted me to convince the others, but I said, “I’m not making a decision for the 68 delegates. I won’t do it.” So, you see, after they talked to these people and we didn’t know nothing about it, then they had the press outside waiting [to write] that they was going to accept the compromise. They had them out there. You know, I said, “I’m just going to get up and say what I feel.” People come in to talk that day that we hadn’t never seen before. “I think you people is making a moral victory.” I said, “What do you mean, moral victory, we ain’t getting nothing.” What kind of moral victory was that, that we’d done sit up there, and they’d seen us on television?

We come on back home and go right up on the first tree that we get to because, you know, that’s what they were going to do to us. What had we gained?

I said, “I don’t see how all of these people are stepping on the bandwagon now that didn’t come way up there from Mississippi, 68 delegates subject to being killed on our way back, to compromise no more than we’d gotten here. They only gave us two votes at large cause they knowed we wouldn’t have nothing.” I said, “We just didn’t come here for just that.”

This was what was going to happen. I was standing between Dr. Henry and Reverend Edwin King, so they wasn’t going to hear nothing but what me and Henry and Reverend King said. If Henry had said compromise, the country would have thought today we had compromised. But that’s one

time they weren’t going to hear that word, not out of Henry.

I’ve never carried no weapon, but I would have bit him so hard, he wouldn’t have known what had happened.

Ever since then, so many rumors have got out about me that you would think I was King Kong. A lot of people say I advocate violence. I’ve never been violent, you know, never in my life. But if I know I’m right you don’t stop me. Now you might kill me but you will not stop me from saying I am right. Now they thought they had us sewed up, bag sewed up, but I told it everywhere. You can kill a man, but you can’t kill ideas. Cause that idea’s going to be transferred from one generation till after while, if it’s not too late for all of us, we’ll be free.

NOTES OF A NATIVE SON

In retrospect, among the major criticisms of the Freedom Summer were that (1) it consisted of white people organizing in black communities, and (2) the white people came for only a few weeks or a few months in the summer, but

the black people had to live their entire lives in those communities. The move towards black power, described by Cleve Sellers on page 64 was one result. The criticisms also led to white organizers beginning to work in their own communities.

Bob Zellner, a white Alabamian, had worked with SNCC for four years in the early '60s. In 1967, he returned to his native state, this time to organize among white workers.

BOB ZELLNER

It was like coming back to a different world. I have talked with poor white farmers who, alone in their communities, send their children to Headstart centers run by black people — knowing that only here can the children get a start towards a decent education.

I have talked with white union members in the Deep South, some of them members of the Ku Klux Klan. They know that in a strike black workers will not support the union because it has betrayed them over and over. Yet they know that without the support of black workers their union will be broken and they will go back to starvation wages.

I have walked into union halls and talked with men like this. I make no secret of who I am. I tell them I worked for SNCC in the Civil Rights Movement and now I work with SCEF. I tell them frankly that if they do not want me to stay I will leave immediately.

They do not ask me to leave. Instead they say, “To hell with that. What can you do to help us on a strike?”

I understand that they let me stay because they think maybe I can be their negotiator with the black workers — because of my civil-rights experience. But I have to tell them right away I can’t be that — that no white man can ever again attempt to speak for the black community.

All I can do for them is try to explain what *they* will have to do if they want support from those black workers. Black people won’t make the first move, not any more. And when they go they must offer the black workers a whole loaf, complete equality in the union and all the benefits they have.

As we talk, something has happened to me, too. My first experience in the Movement was in McComb, Mississippi, in 1961. I was attacked by a group of white men who beat me into unconsciousness. Now I am back in the Deep South, working with the same kind of people who beat me

then.

It is not that I never knew any Southern white people before. I grew up in Alabama. My uncle was a sharecropper. I have relatives who used to be in the Ku Klux Klan, and some still are. But I left this world and went into another one. I left because I knew I could not live in a world filled with racism and hate. I had to change that world. I left because I saw no hope of any of the people I had grown up with changing the world — and I saw that black people were going to change it.

Now I am back, and now I think that someday soon some of these people are going to help change the world, too. A few years ago I could not have talked with white people effectively about this. Black people in the South had not organized strength that the white people could see they needed. The Movement has changed all that.

Someday — maybe soon — I think I’ll be able to explain all this to some of the white people I’ve been talking with. I guess I’ve been a stereotype to

them — one of those vicious civil-rights workers who the people who were running the South had convinced them were upsetting their “way of life.” I certainly had a stereotype of them — that they were people waiting on a dark road to kill me, and many of them were.

But now I have met some of them as human beings. We have had different experiences in our lives — but we’ve got lots in common. They want a decent life for their children, just

as I do.

I think they soon may come to understand why I had to work with the black people in the South who were beginning to organize — will know, as I know, that until black people built up the strength they now have, there was no hope for any poor people to have the strength to win those decent lives we all want.

But I think of that time in McComb in 1961. I was in jail with Bob Moses, who was later to develop the historic

1964 Mississippi Summer Project. I remember Bob writing his words that later became famous: “This is Mississippi, the middle of the iceberg. . . . There is a tremor in the middle of the iceberg — from a stone that the builders rejected.”

I cannot say for sure, but it is just possible that today in 1967 there is a new tremor in the iceberg — from other stones that the builder rejected. □

FREEDOM SCHOOL POETRY

Fight on Little Children

Fight on little children, fight on
You know what you’re doing is right,
Don’t stop, keep straight ahead
You’re just bound to win the fight.

Many hardships there will be;
Many trials you’ll have to face.
But go on children, keep fighting
Soon freedom will take hardship’s place.

Sometimes it’s going to be hard;
Sometimes the light will look dim.
But keep it up, don’t get discouraged
Keep fighting, though chances seem slim.

In the end you and I know
That one day the facts they’ll face.
And realize we’re human too.
That freedom’s taken slavery’s place.

— Edith Moore, age 15, McComb

Three Strikes to Freedom

Freedom is like a baseball game,
You have to be set and have an aim,
When that’s done, now you’re ready,
To bat the ball with an arm that’s steady.

Strike one, selfish is the ball,
Missing this one is missing them all,
But you can strike it if you try,
Kindness won’t let anything pass you by.

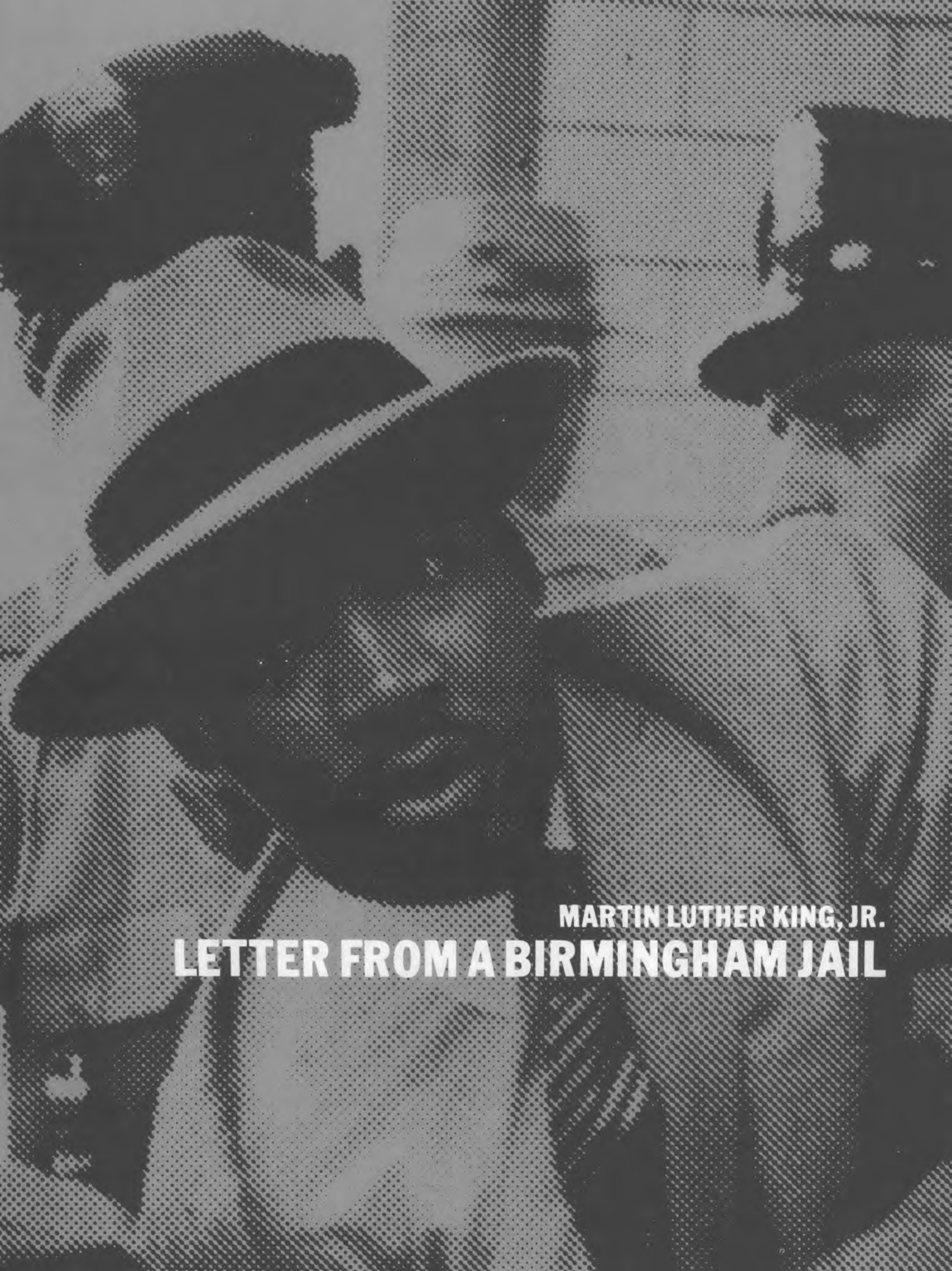
Strike two, the ball is hate,
If this ball could be struck before it’s too late,
The world would be better than just,
Having everybody together because they must.

Strike three, equality is last,
Miss this one and you’re back in the past;
Remember you can’t sit still and wait
For everything to stop and suddenly be straight.

— Mary Zanders, Gulfport

“The Mississippi Movement” is derived from several sources. The story of Birdie Keglal is taken from an article by Bob Moses in *The Southern Patriot* in February, 1962. The interview with Ella Baker was conducted in 1967 as part of a massive civil-rights oral history project at Howard University’s Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. The description of the freedom schools is excerpted from *The Summer*

That Didn’t End by Len Holt. The introduction to the interview with Fannie Lou Hamer, as well as the interview itself, are excerpted from a thesis on the MFDP by Anne Romaine. Bob Zellner’s statement is excerpted from an article by him which appeared in the September, 1967, issue of *The Southern Patriot*. The poems come from *Freedom School Poetry*, published by SNCC in 1965.



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
LETTER FROM A BIRMINGHAM JAIL

While confined here in the Birmingham City Jail, I came across your recent statement calling our present activities "unwise and untimely." Seldom, if ever, do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all of the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would be engaged in little else in the course of the day and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine goodwill and your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I would like to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms. . . .

I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the eighth-century prophets left their little villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their home town, and just as the Apostle Paul left his little village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to practically every hamlet and city of the Graeco-Roman world, I too am compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my particular home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere in this country.

You deplore the demonstrations that are presently taking place in Birmingham. But I am sorry that your statement did not express a similar concern for the conditions that brought the demonstrations into being. I am sure that each of you would want to go beyond the superficial social analyst who merely looks at effects, and does not grapple with underlying causes. I would not hesitate to say that it is unfortunate that so-called demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham at this time, but I would say in more emphatic terms that it is even more unfortunate that the white power structure of this city left the Negro community with no other alternative. . . .

There can be no gainsaying of the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of police brutality is known in every section of this country. Its unjust treatment of Negroes in the courts is a notorious reality. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any city in this nation. These are the hard, brutal and unbelievable facts. On the basis of these conditions Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the political leaders consistently refused to engage in good faith negotiation.

Then came the opportunity last September to talk with some of the leaders of the economic community. In these negotiating sessions certain promises were made by the merchants — such as the promise to remove the humiliating racial signs from the stores. On the basis of these promises Rev. Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to call a moratorium on any type of demonstrations. As the weeks and months unfolded we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. The signs remained. As in so many ex-

periences of the past we were confronted with blasted hopes, and the dark shadow of a deep disappointment settled upon us. So we had no alternative except that of preparing for direct action, whereby we would present our bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and national community. . . .

You may well ask, "Why direct action? Why sit-ins, marches, etc.? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are exactly right in your call for negotiation. Indeed, this is the purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. I just referred to the creation of tension as a part of the work of the nonviolent resister. This may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word tension. I have earnestly worked and preached against violent tension, but there is a type of constructive nonviolent tension that is necessary for growth. . . .

One of the basic points in your statement is that our acts are untimely. . . . We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly I have never yet engaged in a direct action movement that was "well timed," according to the timetable of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with a piercing familiarity. This "wait" has almost always meant "never." It has been a tranquilizing thalidomide, relieving the emotional stress for a moment, only to give birth to an ill-formed infant of frustration. We must come to see with the distinguished jurist of yesterday that "justice too long delayed is justice denied." We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God-given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jet-like speed toward the goal of political independence, and we still creep at horse-and-buggy pace toward the gaining of a cup of coffee at a lunch counter.

I guess it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say wait. But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick, brutalize and even kill your black brothers and sisters with impunity; when you see the vast majority of your 20 million Negro brothers smothering in an air-tight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see the tears welling up in her little eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see the depressing clouds of inferiority begin to form in her little mental sky, and see her begin to distort her little personality by unconsciously developing a bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son asking in agonizing pathos: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross-country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" men and "colored;" when your first name becomes

"nigger" and your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and when your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs.;" when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tip-toe stance never quite knowing what to expect next, and plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness" — then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runneth over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into an abyss of injustice where they experience the bleakness of corroding despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.

You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, it is rather strange and paradoxical to find us consciously breaking laws. One may well ask, "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer is found in the fact that there are two types of laws: there are *just* laws and there are *unjust* laws, I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with Saint Augustine that "An unjust law is no law at all."

Now what is the difference between the two? How does one determine when a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law of the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of Saint Thomas Aquinas, an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. . . .

Let me give another explanation. An unjust law is a code inflicted upon a minority which that minority had no part in enacting or creating because they did not have the unhampered right to vote. Who can say the legislature of Alabama which set up the segregation laws was democratically elected? Throughout the state of Alabama all types of conniving methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters and there are some counties without a single Negro registered to vote despite the fact that the Negro constitutes a majority of the population. Can any law set up in such a state be considered democratically structured? . . .

We can never forget that everything Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal." It was "illegal" to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany. But I am sure that, if I had lived in Germany during that time, I would have aided my Jewish brothers even though it was illegal. . . .

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First I must confess that over the last few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the conclusion that the Negroes' great stumbling block in the stride toward

freedom is not the White Citizens' "Counciler" or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says, "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can't agree with your methods of direct action;" who paternalistically feels that he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by the myth of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait until a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice, and that when they fail to do this they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is merely a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, where the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substance-filled positive peace, where all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured as long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its pus-flowing ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must likewise be exposed, with all of the tension its exposing creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured. . . .

I had also hoped the white moderate would reject the myth of time. I received a letter this morning from a white brother in Texas which said: "All Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but is it possible that you are in too great of a religious hurry? It has taken Christianity almost 2,000 years to accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth." All that is said here grows out of a tragic misconception of time. . . . We must come to see that human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and persistent work of men willing to be co-workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation.

We must use time creatively, and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy, and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity. . . .

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The urge for freedom will eventually come. This is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom; something without has reminded him that he can gain it. Consciously and unconsciously, he has been swept in by what the Germans call the *Zeitgeist*, and with his black brothers of Africa, and his brown and yellow brothers of Asia, South America and the Caribbean, he is moving with a sense of urgency toward the promised land of racial justice. Recognizing this

vital urge that has engulfed the Negro community, one should readily understand public demonstrations. The Negro has many pent-up resentments and latent frustrations. He has to get them out. So let him march sometime; let him have his prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; understand why he must have sit-ins and freedom rides. If his repressed emotions do not come out in these nonviolent ways, they will come out in ominous expressions of violence. This is not a threat; it is a fact of history. So I have not said to my people, "Get rid of your discontent." But I have tried to say that this normal and healthy discontent can be channeled through the creative outlet of non-violent direct action. Now this approach is being dismissed as extremist. I must admit that I was initially disappointed in being so categorized.

But as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a bit of satisfaction from being considered an extremist. Was not Jesus an extremist in love? "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." Was not Amos an extremist for justice — "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." Was not Paul an extremist for the gospel of Jesus Christ — "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Was not Martin Luther an extremist — "Here I stand; I can do none other so help me God." Was not John Bunyan an extremist — "I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my existence." Was not Abraham Lincoln an extremist — "This nation cannot survive half slave and half free." Was not Thomas Jefferson an extremist — "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." So the question is not whether we will be extremist but what kind of extremist will we be. Will we be extremists for hate or will we be extremists for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice — or will we be extremists for the cause of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary's hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime — the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their environment. The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth and goodness, and thereby rose above His environment. So, after all, maybe the South, the nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists. . . .

Let me rush on to mention my other disappointment. I have been so greatly disappointed with the white Church and its leadership. Of course there are some notable exceptions. I am not unmindful of the fact that each of you has taken some significant stands on this issue. I commend you, Reverend Stallings, for your Christian stand on this past Sunday, in welcoming Negroes to your worship service on a non-segregated basis. I commend the Catholic leaders of this state for integrating Springhill College several years ago.

But despite these notable exceptions I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the Church. I do not say that as one of those negative critics who can always find something wrong with the Church. I say it as a minister of the gospel, who loves the Church; who was nurtured in its bosom; who has been sustained by its spiritual blessings and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen.

I had the strange feeling when I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery several years ago that we would have the support of the



Charles Moore/Black Star

white Church. I felt that the white ministers, priests and rabbis of the South would be some of our strongest allies. Instead, some have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the Freedom Movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained glass windows.

In spite of my shattered dreams of the past, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership of this community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern, serve as the channel through which our just grievances could get to the power structure. I had hoped that each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed.

I have heard numerous religious leaders of the South call upon their worshippers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers say follow this decree because integration is morally right and the Negro is your brother. In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churches stand on the sideline and merely mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard so many ministers say, "Those are social issues with which the Gospel has no real concern," and I have watched so many churches commit themselves to a completely other-worldly religion which made a strange distinction between body and soul, the sacred and the secular. . . .

But the judgment of God is upon the Church as never before. If the Church of today does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early Church, it will lose its authentic ring, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. I am meeting young people every day whose disappointment with the Church has risen to outright disgust.

Maybe again I have been too optimistic. Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world? Maybe I must turn my faith to the inner spiritual Church, the church within the Church, as the true *ecclesia* and the hope of the world. But again I am thankful to God that some noble souls from the ranks of organized religion have broken loose from the paralyzing chains of conformity and joined us as active partners in the struggle for freedom. They have left their secure congregations and walked the streets of Albany, Georgia, with

us. They have gone through the highways of the South on tortuous rides for freedom. Yes, they have gone to jail with us. Some have been kicked out of their churches and lost the support of their bishops and fellow ministers. But they have gone with the faith that right defeated is stronger than evil triumphant. These men have been the leaven in the lump of the race. Their witness has been the spiritual salt that has preserved the true meaning of the Gospel in these troubled times. They have carved a tunnel of hope through the dark mountain of disappointment.

I hope the Church as a whole will meet the challenge of this decisive hour. But even if the Church does not come to the aid of justice, I have no despair about the future. I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives are presently misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with the destiny of America. . . . If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands.

I must close now. But before closing I am impelled to mention one other point in your statement that troubled me profoundly. You warmly commended the Birmingham police force for keeping "order" and "preventing violence." I don't believe you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its angry violent dogs literally biting six unarmed, nonviolent Negroes. I don't believe you would so quickly commend the policemen if you would observe their ugly and inhuman treatment of Negroes here in the city jail; if you would watch them push and curse old Negro women and young Negro girls; if you would see them slap and kick old Negro men and young Negro boys;

if you will observe them, as they did on two occasions, refuse to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together. I'm sorry that I can't join you in your praise for the police department. . . .

I wish you had commended the Negro sit-inners and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer and their amazing discipline in the midst of the most inhuman provocation. One day the South will recognize its real heroes. They will be the James Merediths, courageously and with a majestic sense of purpose facing jeering and hostile mobs and the agonizing loneliness that characterizes the life of the pioneer. They will be old, oppressed, battered Negro women, symbolized in a 72-year-old woman of Montgomery, Alabama, who rose up with a sense of dignity and with her people decided not to ride the segregated buses, and responded to one who inquired about her tiredness with ungrammatical profundity: "My feet is tired, but my soul is rested." They will be young high school and college students, young ministers of the gospel and a host of the elders, courageously and nonviolently sitting in at lunch counters and willingly going to jail for conscience sake. One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters they were in reality standing up for the best in the American dream and the most sacred values in our Judeo-Christian heritage, and thus carrying our whole nation back to great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in the formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. □

Martin Luther King wrote this letter on April 16, 1963, in response to an open letter directed at him from eight Alabama clergymen.

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the South
will recognize
its real heroes.”**

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Southern Exposure

Dear Readers:

The spirit and dedication of the Civil Rights Movement rediscovered through our work on "Stayed on Freedom" inspires us at Southern Exposure to intensify our own efforts to keep the country from reverting back to the repressive era of the 1950s.

We see the need to revitalize our ties to grass-roots people and to rebuild with them an interracial base in Southern communities which can confront right-wing ideologies and regressive policies at the local and national level.

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LEN HOLT THE CUP RUNS OVER

Coming from the airport May 6, we drove past the post office and onto Fifth Avenue toward the A.G. Gaston Motel, integration headquarters. Then we saw why the downtown area was "cop-less." On the roofs of the three- and four-story buildings surrounding Kelly-Ingram Park were clusters of policemen with short-wave radios over their shoulders. At the four intersections surrounding the park were dozens of white-helmeted officers.

With the Birmingham police were reinforcements from such nearby cities as Bessemer, Fairfield and Leeds. Also on hand were deputy sheriffs of Jefferson County and a sprinkling of state troopers. The officers seemed fearful. This fear was expressed in marathon chatter and forced joviality as they waited for the ordeal that was to come: another massive demonstration.

Pressing on each cop were the eyes of 4,000 Negro spectators — women, men, boys, girls and mothers with

babies. They were on the porches, lawns, cars and streets surrounding the park. They didn't talk much, just looked . . . and waited.

Frequently both the policemen and Negro spectators turned toward the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. From the more than 3,000 persons inside the church, and 300 pressing toward its doors on the outside — mostly grammar and high school students — came the loud songs of freedom: "We Shall Overcome," "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Round."

The temperature hit 90 degrees. Everybody was sweating. "Freedom! Freedom!" A roar arose from the church. Some officers unleashed clubs from their belts. The faces of those I could see had turned crimson. Jeremiah X, Muslim minister from Atlanta standing near me, commented: "At any moment those cops expect 300 years of hate to spew forth from that church."

"Y'all niggers go on back. We ain't letting no more get on those steps," a police captain ordered as I approached the church. I turned away. The time was 1:10 p.m. Four fire engines arrived at the intersections and set themselves up for "business." Each disgorged its high-pressure hoses, and nozzle mounts were set up in the street. I was to learn the reason for the mounts later, when I watched the powerful water stripping bark off trees and tearing bricks from the walls as the firemen knocked Negroes down.

Before I could get back to the motel the demonstrations began; 60 demonstrators were on their way, marching two abreast, each with a sign bearing an integration slogan. Dick Gregory, the nightclub comedian, was leading the group.

At a signal, 40 policemen converged, sticks in hand. Up drove yellow school buses.

"Do you have a permit to parade?" asked the police captain.

"No," replied Gregory.

"No, what?" asked the captain in what seemed to be a reminder to Gregory that he had not used a "sir."

"No. No. A thousand times no," Gregory replied.

The captain said, "I hereby place you all under arrest for parading without a permit, disturbing the peace and violating the injunction of the Circuit Court of Jefferson County."

Bedlam broke loose. The young demonstrators began shouting a free-

dom song. They broke into a fast step that seemed to be a hybrid of the turkey-trot and the twist as they sang to the tune of "The Old Grey Mare:"

*"I ain't scared of your jail
cause I want my freedom!
. . . want my freedom!"*

And for the next two hours this scene was repeated over and over as group after group of students strutted out of the church to the cheers of the spectators, the freedom chants of those being carried away in buses and a continuous banging on the floors and sides of the buses — a cacophony of freedom.

That day, the dogs were kept out of sight. The Birmingham riot tank was on the side street. The fire hoses were kept shut. The police clubs did not flail. The thousands of spectators also kept calm. The police savagery of the preceding week was contained.

Back at the Gaston Motel, there was a joyous air. Leaders in the organizational work, such as Dorothy Cotten, James Bevel and Bernard Lee of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Isaac Wright, CORE field secretary; and James Forman, William Porter, William Ricks, Eric Rainey and students of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee joined others in the motel parking lot in a parade and song fest.

Victory was suggested by the absence of the dogs, the lack of violence. Added to this was the news that a judge had continued the cases of 40 persons because "there was no room at the inn" for those sentenced. The threat of the Movement to fill the jails had been realized in Birmingham.

Rejoicing was short-lived. At six p.m. word got back to the motel that the 1,000 students arrested earlier had neither been housed nor fed. With Jim Forman of SNCC, I drove to the jail. There were youths throwing candy bars over the fence to the students; spectators had passed the hat to purchase the candy. While we were there it began to rain. The students got soaked. The spectators, too, got wet. There was no shelter for the kids. The cops and their dogs got into the squad cars. They stayed dry.

Forman begged the cops to put the kids inside, in the halls, in the basement of the jail, anywhere. Nothing was done. A new day had not yet



come to Birmingham.

That night the weather turned cool. We learned that the students were still in the jail yard, unsheltered and unfed. The same message got to the others in the Negro community. An estimated 500 cars and 1,200 people drove to the jail with blankets and food. The police responded by bringing up dogs and fire hoses. The food and blankets were given to the kids. The crowd waited until all of the children were finally taken inside.

Later that night Forman and Dorothy Cotten of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference met with the student leaders. In the planning, emphasis was placed on the need for speed and mobility. Heretofore the demonstrators seldom got downtown, or if they did, never in a large group. It was decided that instead of starting the demonstrations every day at one p.m., when the fire hoses were in place and the police were all on duty, an element of surprise would be introduced. The next demonstration would begin earlier. Picket signs would be taken downtown to prearranged spots in cars where the students could pick them up.

That night five of us slept in a motel room designed for two. We were crowded, but so were the 2,000 students crammed 75 or more in cells for eight in the city jail. Our room was hot that night, but not so hot as the unventilated sweat boxes in which Cynthia Cook, 15, and other girls were placed as punishment by the jail personnel when they refused to say "sir." Those on the outside were tired, but not so tired as the hundreds who had been forced to make marathon walks because they sang "We Shall Overcome" in jail. And there were beatings for many.

At six a.m. Tuesday, SNCC and CORE fellows hurried to the schools to get out the students. Before 10:00 — and before the police lines and firehoses were in place — 600 students had been to the church and been given assignments downtown. Cars were dispatched with picket signs. The clock struck noon. The students struck. Almost simultaneously, eight department stores were picketed.

I was standing near a police motorcycle, and could hear the pandemonium at police headquarters. Police not due to report until after 12:30 were being called frantically. Policemen sped, sirens screaming, from Kelly-

Ingram Park to downtown. Inside the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church the folk laughed and sang "We Shall Overcome."

Over the police radio I heard Bull Connor's voice. He was mad. He had been betrayed. Never before had the students demonstrated before one p.m. I suspect the merchants were mad. And the kids downtown, all 600 of them, sang "We Shall Overcome." And they did overcome. No arrests were made. When the police finally got to the area, they merely ripped up the signs and told the youngsters to go home. The jails were full.

For the students, "home" was back to the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. There they were reassigned to go to Woolworth's and six other department stores, sit on the floor, and not move unless arrested. Since the jails were full, the cops still weren't arresting. A policeman went to the church to tell somebody from the Movement to ask the students to leave. When the announcement was made in the church, 2,000 persons went downtown. These thousands were joined by 2,000 spectators and made a wild, hilarious parade through downtown Birmingham, singing "We Shall Overcome."

Then the nearly 4,000 persons returned to the church from the "victory march." And while the throngs joyously sang inside, preparations were being made outside. The cars with dogs drove up. About 300 police officers surrounded the church and park area. Fire hoses were set up.

For a few minutes I left the area of the church and went to a nearby office. When I emerged I saw 3,000 Negroes encircled in the Kelly-Ingram Park by policemen swinging clubs. The hoses were in action with the pressure wide open. On one side the students were confronted by clubs, on the other by powerful streams of water. The firemen used the hoses to knock down the students. As the streams hit trees, the bark was ripped off. Bricks were torn loose from the walls.

The hoses were directed at everyone with a black skin, demonstrators and non-demonstrators. A stream of water slammed the Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth against the church wall, causing internal injuries. Mrs. Colia LaFayette, 25-year-old SNCC field secretary from Selma, Alabama, was knocked down and two hoses were brought to bear on her to wash her along the sidewalk. A youth ran toward the firemen scream-

ing oaths to direct their attention from the sprawling woman.

Meanwhile, over the public address system inside the church, I could hear a speaker admonishing the people to be nonviolent: "We want to redeem the souls of people like Bull Connor."

I wondered how long it would be before some Negro lost his restraint. It had almost happened Monday, the day before, when cops flung a Negro woman to the ground and two of them had put their knees in her breast and twisted her arm. This was done in the presence of the woman's 19-year-old son and thousands of Negro spectators. Four 200-pound Negro men barely managed to restrain the son.

That terrible Tuesday, May 7, ended finally. There was much talk about an impending "settlement." This news discouraged all but the most cursory plans for the next day. Everyone realized the influx of state troopers would make downtown demonstrations difficult.

A strange thing about the demonstrations up until Wednesday was that all of the brutality had been police brutality. Where were the thugs who with razor blades, a few years previously, had cut off the penis of a Negro? Where were the men who stabbed Mrs. Ruby Shuttlesworth when she attempted to enroll her child in the white high school? Where were the whites who repeatedly bombed Birmingham churches and synagogues?

On Wednesday, after almost five weeks of protesting, the non-uniformed racists had not spoken. On May 12, Mother's Day, they spoke . . . and the cup of nonviolence of Birmingham Negroes overflowed. America learned that the patience of 100 years is not inexhaustible. It is exhausted.

Leaders of SCLC and the white merchants agreed on May 10 to adopt a plan to end segregation at selected lunch counters in Birmingham. The next day, "Bull" Connor urged white racists to boycott stores which agreed to integrate. That evening, white terrorists struck with a series of bombings. On May 12, a rebellion involving several thousand blacks occurred, causing damage to property in the millions of dollars. □

Len Holt is a Movement lawyer who wrote this article in 1963 while he was a National Lawyers Guild observer of the Southern Freedom Movement.



Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round.

Ain't gonna let no Nervous Nelly turn me 'round [term for segregationist]

Ain't gonna let Mayor Kelly [Albany mayor]

Ain't gonna let Chief Pritchett [police chief]

Ain't gonna let Ronald Reagan

Ain't gonna let no jail house

Ain't gonna let no bureaucrat

Ain't gonna let no draft

This old spiritual was first introduced in Albany, Georgia, by Rev. Ralph Abernathy during 1962, when mass arrests and demonstrations erupted for the second time. It immediately caught on and became widely used in demonstrations.



INSURGENT MEMORIES

GWENDOLYN M. PATTON



Steve Schapiro/Black Star

The National Guard stood at the entrances to Tuskegee Institute. We stopped. Somehow the guards mistook my grandmother's nod to my cousin to drive on through Lincoln Gates as an acknowledgment to them. They nodded to her. It disconcerted me. My grandmother slightly turned her eyes to them with a pleasant, yet placid, smile as my cousin drove on through the gates.

I blotted out the military salutations. I had been taught by my father to always courteously dismiss whites in authority uniforms; otherwise, depending on their personal situations and moods, it could mean serious trouble for a Negro. I smiled to them, like my grandmother, as my cousin drove on to James Hall.

Later I learned that the Guard had been called up because Negroes were exercising their new 1954 legal right to attend the white public high school in the Tuskegee community. These Alabamian Guards, who in the main probably supported the segregationist Governor George C. Wallace, were asked to protect Negroes from the segregationists.

Why the Guard presence in a county with a population 87 percent black? Surely we, as citizens, could carry out the law of the land.

My search for answers led me to the periphery of a very small, close-knit underground student movement. I read *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, a former student at Tuskegee Institute, and wondered why he was not on the faculty. I met Dr. Paul Puryear, a political scientist, who was undergoing polite ostracism by his superiors in the administration. Everybody said he was a scholar,

In 1965, Tuskegee Institute students joined thousands of others in the historic Selma-to-Montgomery march. The path that took them there was not easy.

an intellect — an exceptionally brilliant teacher. His only infraction was that he dared to venture from the sanctuary of the Institute to vie in the mayoral election downtown, the province of the white city fathers.

The underground movement clandestinely circulated leaflets; quietly exchanged ideas and discussed the matters of the day over chess boards; eagerly kept abreast of African developments towards independence; envisioned what it would be like when the sleeping “model city” woke up to the nightmare of black reality in white America.

The Guards left in the quiet of the night. So did Dr. Paul Puryear. Our movement scored a victory and suffered a monumental loss. I did not know that an unconscious deal had been effected until years later.

I became a cheerleader. When not studying, my thoughts created intricate patterns to cheer the Golden Tigers on to victory. I divorced myself from the fact that my grandmother's house was the home for freedom fighters. I put aside my sit-in and Freedom Ride experiences. I obliterated the sight of the Mother's Day Massacre when Freedom Riders met the onslaught of Montgomery's own “national guards.”

The contradiction of separating college study from social consciousness was revealed when I

discovered that the library had limited resources on sexual behavior theories. My "Marriage and the Family" research paper encountered institutional limitations. Granted an audience with a vice president, I suggested we use an \$80,000 donation to the Institute to buy books for the library. I was told that this could not be done since the gift was earmarked for a reflecting pool which could be transformed into an outdoor stage. This first encounter with an absentee, rich liberal via a Negro intermediary defined for me the neutralizing role of whites who, through their philanthropy, sugar-coat and shroud racism.

The reflecting pool is a sore sight on campus today. The library is still not only in need of books, but is in dire need of fundamental renovations.

Tuskegee's budding young adult-children came home from the New England prep schools. It became abundantly clear that rubbing shoulders with upper-class white kids activated their thirst for black freedom. Immediately they made fast friends with their community childhood classmates whose parents could not afford to send them to prep schools. The invisible man came up from his subterranean existence.

This coalition organized themselves into the Tuskegee Institute Advancement League (TIAL). TIAL beseeched the long-standing Tuskegee Civic Association (TCA) for organizational inclusion, but the concept of coalitions on a particular issue was incomprehensible to the TCA at the time, though they had successfully won a gerrymandering case before the Supreme Court.

TIAL drafted its own program:

- We will assist other organizations with voter registration projects.
- We will conduct Freedom Schools in Fort Green, Little Texas and other outlying communities.
- We will establish an office and tax ourselves for the rent.
- We will fight for summer jobs downtown so students won't have to go north to earn money for school expenses.
- We will monitor and participate in city council meetings.
- We will assist with freedom organizing efforts in Dallas and Lowndes Counties.
- We will join with others who are fighting for freedom.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) accepted our platform. The student body president, a New Yorker, gave up his responsibility as TIAL became more and more a legitimate voice of student sentiment for action. TIAL thus provided the leadership for 1,500 activist

students out of the total enrollment of 2,300.

This student mandate to TIAL was granted through the bus ride to Montgomery to petition for the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Bill. The student body en masse, despite threats of expulsion from the administration, accompanied TIAL on that historical pilgrimage. The campus changed into a ghost town after students received brown-paper-bag lunches of an apple and a bologna sandwich dispensed by cafeteria workers. The *Invisible Man* multiplied into visible wo/men as they rode to the citadel of segregation and repression, the cradle of the Confederacy, singing freedom songs to fortify the righteousness of their actions.

The students, assembled before the State Capitol, dispatched their appointed leaders to attempt to see Governor Wallace. When police officers' billy clubs battered the heads of several students, the students immediately sat down in the streets and sang freedom songs. The ride on high to freedom had plummeted to the sinkin on low of what it means to be black in Alabama. The moral purity of the students' purpose, protected by their enthusiastic singing of freedom songs, warded off the enveloping gloom that black people's freedom was not on Alabama's agenda. The actions of the FBI left us wondering if we, as a people, were even on the nation's agenda.

The student leaders dispatched to arrange the meeting with the governor were not permitted to join the group. They shouted out that the governor would not meet with the delegation nor would he accept the petition. As the students attempted to read the petition to a nearby FBI agent, they were arrested for standing on state property. A hard core of about 300 students vowed to sit-in in front of the Capitol until Governor Wallace decided to meet with them.

The pilgrimage had started out with naive, idealistic students marching for freedom. Fourteen hours later on a chilly March night, the 300 emerged as insurgents.

The students sought refuge at the nearby Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, the famed black church where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., pastored, just one block from the State Capitol. It was after midnight. Exhausted and chilled to the bone, students sought sleep on the floor, in the pews — wherever they could lie down to rest.

The toilets would not flush; there was no water; there was no heat; there were no lights; the Deacon Board had had the utilities cut off. Outside, the law enforcers encircled the church, a rude awakening for the new insurgents. Finally, students from Tuskegee Institute and Alabama State came and, standing as a buffer between us and the police, called us out of the church. Their strength made us feel safe to leave.



Charles Moore/Black Star

The Montgomery experience gave birth to the scholar-activist concept. Tuskegee Institute had to reckon with this blossoming insurgency. The faculty who financially supported the pilgrimage went underground to avoid Puryear-type reprimands for their advancing the freedom calls. They became the new invisible wo/men.

The first order of business when the students returned to the campus was to halt “business as usual.” A moratorium, as it was called, was declared. Students presented demands to faculty and administrators: first, students were to be included, in a fundamental way, in campus governance; and second, students were to continue their activism on and off campus with instruction and faculty complement. Jennifer Jones, a biology major, summed it up: “There is no need for me to study bacteria pathology if I can’t do something about the well water in Little Texas.” Students, faculty and administrators did not resume pre-Montgomery interaction. Tuskegee’s adult-children became adult students, preparing themselves to impact on the nation and the world.

After serious thought, I decided to run for the student body presidency on the theme: “Total Representation for the Total Student Body.” I made special appeals to African and other international students, to married students and to campus-

Students from Tuskegee and other campuses flee mounted posse. They had answered SNCC's call for the first Selma-to-Montgomery March. While a group of student leaders tried to meet with Alabama Governor George Wallace, the posse made its attack. Students found refuge in the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, formerly pastored by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. See James Forman's book, Sammy Younge, Jr.

wide organizations like the YM-YWCA. My campaign was well-structured with a line-item budget. My campaign manager — now a human relations officer in a Connecticut city — advised me to make my campaign signs out of wood with waterproof paint.

The Board of Trustees was coming to Tuskegee Institute for its annual meeting on Founder's Day. Student candidates were summoned to the president's office and asked to take down our campaign signs. I asked why and was told that the signs had become unattractive as a result of the previous rain spell. Surely I was to be excused since my wooden signs with waterproof paint had not been damaged by the rain. I was told flatly that all of the signs, including mine, had to come down. I refused. The following day I presented a petition with well over 1,000 student and faculty signatures supporting the right to keep all of the signs up. The other candidates removed their weatherbeaten signs. I kept my signs up. I am convinced that the sign



Charles Moore/Black Star



Charles Moore/Black Star

incident delivered the 75 percent mandate for me to serve as their president. The invisible man came above ground again.

On another front, the extraordinarily brilliant dean of students, Dr. P.B. Phillips, who had excellent rapport with students, was awarded \$2.5 million from the Office of Equal Opportunity for his Tuskegee Institute Community Education Program. This meant summer jobs for many of the scholar-activists, Tuskegee was in the making for a long, hot summer.

Students pressed for summer jobs with downtown merchants to no avail. Picket lines immediately went up at the Big Bear supermarket. We had rotating picket lines. Wendy Paris used his father's "freedom truck" and other students their cars to carry students to and fro on the hour so classes would not be missed. We conducted Freedom Schools in the county and assisted folks in registering to vote. The registrar was always recalcitrant to enforce the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Gaining experiences in Lowndes and Dallas Counties, a student delegation, spearheaded by Sammy Younge, Jr., went to Sunflower County, Mississippi, to learn the workings of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Other students tested the 1964 Public Accommodations Act and filed complaints against businesses which still refused to serve blacks. Others attended city council meetings, and when one of the members stonewalled appropriations to construct a low-rent housing complex, a picket line went up in front of his bank. Study groups on African liberation blossomed, with African students leading the workshops and the cultural exchange programs.

A freedom house was rented for full-time organizers. The TIAL office added another line to its already busy phone. We continued sit-ins, wade-ins. Students were arrested; we posted bail. Movement activity became as routine as going to classes.

The administration asked us to ease some of our civil-rights activity. White/Negro interaction was approaching model human relations, we were told. The students decided to test this notion. The Presbyterian Synod had passed a resolution that church services should serve all those who wished to attend. We asked a well-established black Presbyterian if she would worship at the white church in Tuskegee, Alabama, and invite them to attend her Presbyterian church. Fortified with the Synod resolution of good will, she agreed. The following Sunday white Presbyterians/Christians put her out of *their* church and slammed the door in her face. Soon afterwards, the students received even more underground support from Tuskegee's Negro middle class.

White tensions mounted and finally erupted into violence. The white vigilantes attacked us with bottles, chains, baseball bats. The vigilantes mercilessly beat a white exchange student from St. Olaf College in Minnesota. He had polio and could not run, thereby becoming a victim in the bloodbath. Black students rushed to his rescue, battling vigilantes in the process.

I was summoned to the president's office. I was not to encourage nor to lead the next Sunday's march to the churches. I replied that the march would go on with or without me, and that the administration had overestimated my control over students. There was genuine concern for the students' safety. I concurred, and suggested that if the Institute's officials would lead the march perhaps the vigilantes would not attack us. Getting only a baffled look, I agreed with TIAL that the Deacons for Justice out of Bogalusa, Louisiana, would be a better assurance for the students' safety. As the Deacons imperceptibly escorted the students on the march to the churches, whites timidly gawked at blacks driving pick-up trucks in the legal shotgun style. The march was peaceful, without incident.

Summer finally came to an end. Students welcomed the vacation to go home to rest.

Five students were threatened with expulsion stemming from a collegiate prank. Athletes were not awarded their promised scholarships. The financial aid officer was surly and slow. Male students burned down the barracks as unfit dormitories. All this occurred during the first week of the fall semester of 1965.

Student leaders met to map out our responsibilities. Some TIAL students worked in the student government office with me to handle campus activities and grievances, while others continued the work in the county. Sammy Younge, Jr., served as liaison between the two formations.

A student judiciary board was established with a student defender; the students who had committed the prank were placed on disciplinary probation by their peers. Athletes were given contracts to include hospitalization coverage. A picket line surrounded the financial aid officer, and he finally granted a conference with student leaders to see how we could facilitate the financial aid process. Male students moved into other dormitories.

TIAL community organizers went to Lowndes County on the weekends to assist in the newly organized Lowndes County Freedom Organization, which had the black panther as its symbol. Their work in Lowndes County became the source material for their classes in political science.

The speakers' bureau, previously handled by the



Downtown Tuskegee, Alabama, 1966.

administration, came under the auspices of student government. Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, Herbert Aptheker, Lonnie Shabazz highlighted the ideological spectrum of ideas. Odetta, Olatunji and Ramsey Lewis integrated the established vespers of concert pianists, aria prima donnas, the American ballet and chamber musicians. The student paper, the *Campus Digest*, was in the very capable hands of Peter Scott. He was an exceptionally analytical student journalist who placed events and actions in a larger perspective. I can still see his headline editorial when students decided not to culminate their homecoming parade in the downtown square: "Pomp and Circumstance."

The student cohesion baffled the administration. They no longer attempted to divide the students or to sneer at their seriousness. Middle-class Negroes attended student meetings and offered input. Students were invited to faculty homes to explain the new assertiveness. Students evolved from complacent Negroes to blacks who not only wanted solutions to racial inequities, but who wanted to help plan the resolution. Students desperately

wanted their elders, their models, to understand this development and to share in the growth. They were the future chemists, veterinarians, lawyers, political scientists, agriculturalists, journalists and educators who had consummated their scholastic achievements with the conviction to struggle for the freedom of our people.

The Tuskegee Institute students read passages of Alexis de Tocqueville in history and political science classes; they read Gunnar Myrdal in sociology classes; they discussed Nietzsche, Aristotle, Hegel in philosophy classes; they studied the black giants in compulsory Negro history class; many students read *Facing Mount Kenya*, Nkrumah and Basil Davidson as supplements to the Negro history class; they analyzed essays of Ruskin, Macaulay, Tom Paine in literature classes; they interpreted the poetry of Lord Byron, Shelley, Keats, Ferlinghetti and Gabriel; they discussed the matters of the day – the Vietnam War, the draft – with their colleagues: H. Rap Brown, Stokely, Evers, Fannie Lou Hamer, Malcolm X. It should not have been a baffling wonder to the administration and the faculty that Tuskegee Institute was producing critical thinkers in an age when critical decisions had to be made.

A separate peace permeated the campus as each component went about its respective business, stopping every now and then via meetings to see the other perspective. The campus buzzed with activity. The community buzzed with activity. There was order and mutual respect.

On January 3, 1966, a shot fired by a white gas station attendant pierced the peaceful still of the night. Sammy Younge, Jr., lay dead on the January-cold concrete. A student activist who challenged the "white-only" toilet was killed in the line of duty.

Tuskegee came unglued.

The campus was in perpetual turmoil for three years thereafter. The acquittal of Sammy's murderer reopened the discussion of the students' role in advancing equality in a racist society. The question was asked by students who painted a yellow stripe down the back of the confederate soldier in the downtown square and attributed the deed to "Black Power!" The questions kept being raised in more meetings and demonstrations; it was clear the students at Tuskegee Institute would no longer settle for answers that left them invisible. □

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CLEVELAND SELLERS FROM BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS TO BLACK POWER

SNCC — the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee — conducted the most important staff meeting in its history during the second week in May, 1966.

There was widespread agreement that it was time for SNCC to begin building independent black political organizations. We were convinced that such organizations working together could end racial oppression once and for all. Most of our time was spent discussing the best ways to publicize and win support for this new approach to the struggle.

We were absolutely convinced that there was no viable future for blacks — poor blacks especially — within the Republican and Democratic parties. We were also convinced that the federal government, where we had looked for support in the past, was part of the problem.

A small minority of those present were worried about SNCC's new commitment to independent black politics. "How can we create an integrated society if we are building racially segregated political parties?" they asked. This was a legitimate question. Most of us were convinced, however, that it missed the point.

"Blacks are not being lynched and dumped into muddy rivers across the South because they aren't 'integrated,'" we countered. "Black babies are not dying of malnutrition because their parents do not own homes in white communities. Black men and women are not being forced to pick cotton for three dollars a day because of segregation. 'Integration' has little or no effect on such problems.

"Look at all those 'integrated' towns and cities in the Midwest. Niggers up there have it just as bad as we down here. The real issue is power; the power to control the significant events which affect our lives. If we have power, we can keep people from fucking us over. When we are powerless, we have about as much control over our destinies as a piece of dog shit."

It was obvious that many of those whom we hoped to influence were not thinking in terms of power. We believed they lacked the proper point of view; they did not possess what we called "black consciousness." Throughout the staff meeting, we talked about black consciousness. It was new and exciting.

What is black consciousness? More than anything else, it is an attitude, a way of seeing the world. Those of us who possessed it were involved in a perpetual search for racial meanings. Black consciousness, which was an admitted consequence of the failure of the Movement up to that point, forced us to begin the construction of a new, black

value system — a value system geared to the unique cultural and political experience of blacks in this country.

Black consciousness signaled the end of the use of the word *Negro* by SNCC's members. Black consciousness permitted us to relate our struggle to the one being waged by Third World revolutionaries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It helped us understand the imperialistic aspects of domestic racism. It helped us understand that the problems of this nation's oppressed minorities will not be solved without revolution.

From an organizational point of view, black consciousness presented SNCC with one major problem. More than 25 percent of our members were white. It was obvious that they did not and probably could not possess black

James Meredith being lowered onto a stretcher after being shot during his March Against Fear.

Vernon Merritt, III/Black Star



consciousness.

During the first month after that meeting, Stanley Wise, Stokely Carmichael (elected SNCC chairperson at the May meeting) and I traveled across the South visiting SNCC projects. Stokely wanted to get a clear idea of the work people were doing. We were in Little Rock, Arkansas, talking with Project Director Ben Greenwich and some of his staff when a lawyer came up and told us that James Meredith had been killed.

“Who did it? How did it happen?”

The lawyer didn't know. He had only heard a news bulletin on the radio. “All I know is that some white fella shot him in the head while he was walking down some Mississippi highway,” he replied.

The news of Meredith's death reminded me of the dull, aching pain that seemed always to be lurking in the pit of my stomach. Even though I'd always believed that Meredith's intention to march across Mississippi in order to prove that blacks didn't have to fear white violence any longer was absurd, I was enraged.

We didn't find out until two hours later that Meredith had not actually been murdered. The pellets from the shotgun, which had been fired from about 50 feet, had only knocked him unconscious. Although he lost a great deal of blood, doctors in the Memphis hospital where he had been taken were predicting that he would recover. Because we were only a few hours' drive from Memphis, we decided to go there the next day.

When we arrived at the hospital the next afternoon, Martin Luther King and CORE's new national director, Floyd McKissick, were visiting Meredith. Stanley, Stokely

and I joined them. After saying hello to Meredith and congratulating him on his “good luck,” we left with Dr. King and McKissick. Meredith was still very weak. On the way down, we were informed that although initially reluctant, Meredith had agreed that the march should be continued without him. He intended to join it as soon as he recuperated.

Later that afternoon, a group which included Stokely, Stanley Wise, Dr. King, McKissick and me drove out on the highway to the spot where Meredith had been ambushed. We walked for about three hours. We wanted to advertise that the march would be continued. Although we were all quite tense, there was only one incident. A burly white state trooper, who insisted that we could not walk on the roadway, pushed Stokely. In the ensuing scramble, I was knocked to the ground and nearly trampled by Dr. King, who was attempting to keep Stokely from attacking the trooper.

Two days later, a planning meeting was held at the Centenary Methodist Church, whose pastor was an ex-SNCC member, the Reverend James Lawson. The meeting was attended by representatives from all those groups interested in participating in the march, including Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young, who had flown in earlier in the day.

Participants in the meeting were almost immediately divided by the position taken by Stokely. He argued that the march should be de-emphasize white participation, that it should be used to highlight the need for independent black political units, and that the Deacons for Defense, a black group from Louisiana whose members carried

Maria Varela





Maria Varela

guns, should be permitted to join the march.

Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young were adamantly opposed to Stokely. They wanted to send out a nationwide call to whites; they insisted that the Deacons be excluded and they demanded that we issue a statement proclaiming our allegiance to nonviolence.

Dr. King held the deciding vote. If he had sided with Wilkins and Young, they would have held sway. Fortunately, he didn't. He attempted to serve as a mediator. Although he favored mass white participation and non-violence, he was committed to the maintenance of a united front. Most of his time was spent attempting to get the rest of us to agree that unity was necessary. It was obvious to me from the beginning that the possibilities of unity were almost nil.

Despite considerable pressure, Dr. King refused to repudiate Stokely. Wilkins and Young were furious. Realizing that they could not change Stokely's mind, they packed their briefcases and announced that they didn't intend to have anything to do with the march. By the time we held the press conference the next day to announce officially that the march would occur, they were on their way back to New York City.

The march began in a small way. We had few people, maybe 150. That was okay. We were headed for SNCC territory and we were calling the shots. We had conducted an all-SNCC meeting with Bob Smith and his staff before the march began and everything was perfectly organized.

A small crew of SNCC organizers had been assigned the task of traveling ahead to make contact in the communities through which we passed. Old SNCC volunteers, people who had worked with us during the summer of 1964, were contacted in each town. They were asked to provide meals, sanitary facilities and sites for the nightly mass meetings. They were also told to make preparations for the voter-registration drives that we intended to conduct in each town.

Although SNCC people were dominating the march, Dr. King was enjoying himself immensely. Each day he was out there marching with the rest of us. His nights were spent in the huge circuslike sleeping tent. For one of the first times in his career as a civil-rights leader, he was

shoulder to shoulder with the troops. Most of his assistants, who generally stationed themselves between him and his admirers, were attending an SCLC staff meeting in Atlanta.

Little by little, Dr. King began to agree that it *might* be necessary to emphasize black consciousness. He also agreed that our commitment to independent black organizations *might* just work. By the end of the first week, he was giving speeches at the nightly rallies in favor of blacks' seeking power in those areas where they were in the majority.

From the very beginning of the march, poor blacks along the route were awestruck by Dr. King's presence. They had heard about him, seen him on television, but had never expected to see him in person. As we trekked deeper into the Delta, the people grew less reserved.

The same incredible scene would occur several times each day. The blacks along the way would line the side of the road, waiting in the broiling sun to see him. As we moved closer, they would edge out onto the pavement, peering under the brims of their starched bonnets and tattered straw hats. As we drew abreast someone would say, "There he is! Martin Luther King!" This would precipitate a rush of 2,000, sometimes as many as 3,000 people. We would have to join arms and form a cordon in order to keep him from being crushed.

It's difficult to explain exactly what he meant to them. He was a symbol of all their hopes for a better life. By being there and showing that he really cared, he was helping to destroy barriers of fear and insecurity that had been hundreds of years in the making. They trusted him. Most important, he made it possible for them to believe that they *could* overcome.

As we got closer to the Greenwood area, the nightly meetings took on the character of a speaking fete. Stokely, who had worked out of Greenwood during the summer of 1964, was well known. Many of those who attended the nightly rallies wanted to see and hear him. Others were attracted by Dr. King. The two of them were like dynamite. Their fervent speeches left all who heard them both emotionally exhausted and inspired.

The Deacons for Defense served as our bodyguards. Their job was to keep our people alive. We let them decide the best way to accomplish this. Whenever suspicious



Bob Fletcher/SNCC

June 16, 1966 – Stokely Carmichael, chairperson of SNCC, arrested in Greenwood, Mississippi, while attempting to put up a tent for the marchers.

whites were observed loitering near the march route, the Deacons would stop them and demand that they state their business. In those areas where there were hills adjacent to the road, they walked the ridges of the hills. We did not permit the news media's criticism of the Deacons' guns to upset us. Everyone realized that without them, our lives would have been much less secure.

We had our first major trouble with the police on June 17, in Greenwood. It began when a contingent of state troopers arbitrarily decided that we could not put up our sleeping tent on the grounds of a black high school. When Stokely attempted to put up the tent anyway, he was arrested. Within minutes, word of his arrest had spread all over town. The rally that night, which was held in a city park, attracted almost 3,000 people – five times the usual number.

Stokely, who'd been released from jail just minutes before the rally began, was the last speaker. He was preceded by McKissick, Dr. King and Willie Ricks. Like the rest of us, they were angry about Stokely's unnecessary arrest. Their speeches were particularly militant. When Stokely moved forward to speak, the crowd greeted him with a huge roar. He acknowledged his reception with a raised arm and clenched fist.

Realizing that he was in his element, with his people, Stokely let it all hang out. "This is the twenty-seventh time I have been arrested – and I ain't going to jail no more!" The crowd exploded into cheers and clapping.

"The only way we gonna stop them white men from whuppin us is to take over. We been saying freedom for six years and we ain't got nothin. What we gonna start saying now is **BLACK POWER!**"

The crowd was right with him. They picked up his thoughts immediately.

"**BLACK POWER!**" they roared in unison.

Willie Ricks, who was as good at orchestrating the emotions of a crowd as anyone I have ever seen, sprang into action. Jumping to the platform with Stokely, he yelled to the crowd, "What do you want?"

"**BLACK POWER!**"

"What do you want?"

"**BLACK POWER!!**"

"What do you want?"

"BLACK POWER!! BLACK POWER!!! BLACK POWER!!!!"

Everything that happened afterward was a response to that moment. More than anything, it assured that the Meredith March Against Fear would go down in history as one of the major turning points in the black liberation struggle. The nation's news media, who latched onto the slogan and embellished it with warnings of an imminent racial cataclysm, smugly waited for the predictable chaotic response.

From SNCC's point of view, the march was a huge success. Despite the bitter controversy precipitated by Stokely's introduction of black power, we enjoyed several important accomplishments: thousands of voters were registered along the route; Stokely emerged as a national leader; the Mississippi Movement acquired new inspiration; and major interest was generated in independent black political organizations.

One of our most important accomplishments was the deep friendship that developed between Dr. King and those SNCC members who participated in the march. I have nothing but fond memories of the long, hot hours we spent trudging along the highway, discussing strategy, tactics and our dreams.

I will never forget his magnificent speeches at the nightly rallies. Nor the humble smile that spread across his face when throngs of admirers rushed forward to touch him. Though he was forced by political circumstance to disavow black power for himself and for his organization, there has never been any question in my mind since our March Against Fear that Dr. King was a staunch ally and a true brother. □

Cleveland Sellers was program secretary of SNCC and is the author of The River of No Return, from which this article is excerpted. Sellers is currently an administrator of the Greensboro, North Carolina, CETA program.

ANNE BRADEN

A VIEW FROM THE FRINGES



Dale Ernsberger

Billboards like the one on the left above appeared throughout the South. The photograph of King used in the billboard was taken by a disguised photographer from the Georgia Education Committee.

The historic 1964 Freedom Summer brought 1,000 young people from across the nation to Mississippi to work in the Civil Rights Movement. During that summer, I never set foot in the state of Mississippi.

This was not because I was not active in the Civil Rights Movement. I was working all through the South, and had been in and out of Mississippi many times. But I stayed away that summer at the request of good friends in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the main mover in Mississippi. It was a friendly request: "Help us by staying away," they said, and I did.

This illustrates an aspect of the Freedom Movement of the '50s and '60s so far almost totally ignored by historians: the war that was waged to keep anyone suspected of being "radical," and thereby any radical ideas, out. It was a war initiated from the highest levels in this country, with assistance from within the movement itself.

Thus there was a category of people who lived and worked on what I call "the fringes of the Movement," never quite accepted and sometimes viewed as more dangerous than the segregationists. In my own case, the problem was in part my connection with the organization I worked for, the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF), and in part my own history and that of my husband and co-worker, Carl Braden.

Carl was a journalist who had a long history in CIO labor organizing drives. From the late '40s on, we were active in militant civil-rights activities in Louisville, Kentucky, where we lived, and in 1954 were charged with sedition after we (being white) bought and resold a house in a segregated neighborhood to a black couple. It was a flamboyant case, which we finally won, but in the process we became symbols of evil to many people.

We went to work in 1957 as field organizers for SCEF, which did nothing to allay the fears of people who already saw that organization as a red menace. SCEF descended from the Southern Conference for Human Welfare (SCHW), which had been organized in 1938 to attack economic problems in the poverty-stricken South, and which quickly became a civil-rights organization also, because it could not deal with economic issues without confronting segregation. It was a coalition — of church people, unionists, students and Communists, which in 1938 did not seem unusual. Its program could only be described as reformist: support for Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs, labor's right to organize, an end to racial discrimination.

Its label as a "red menace" came from attacks by various governmental investigating committees that roamed the land calling efforts for social change subversive. SCHW was a first major target of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), also organized in 1938, under Representative Martin Dies of Texas.

HUAC issued a report saying SCHW was not interested in "human welfare" at all but was promoting communism in the South. That report became the basis for all future attacks on SCEF, and was used by Senator James Eastland and his Internal Security Subcommittee at 1954 hearings in New Orleans to prove that SCEF was also "subversive." About that time, many Southern states began setting up committees modeled after HUAC (LUAC in Louisiana, FUAC in Florida, etc.), and they all began to scratch each other's backs, each quoting reports of the others to prove

that SCEF and all who worked with it were a menace.

SCEF was not the only group attacked this way. The National Lawyers Guild, also dating back to the '30s, was another — especially when it began sending lawyers into Mississippi, where the freedom movement could find virtually no local lawyers. Len Holt, a militant young black lawyer in Norfolk who played a key role in bringing the Lawyers Guild south, was under constant assault; at one point, agents of the Virginia investigating committee burst into his office and demanded all his records. According to Jim Forman, SNCC executive secretary, Mississippi Movement leaders were once summoned to a meeting at the U.S. Justice Department, where Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., told them he and others found it "unpardonable" that SNCC would work with the Lawyers Guild.

Another target was Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee, a training center for labor and civil-rights organizers since the '30s. In the mid-'50s, Arkansas Attorney General Bruce Bennett, whose mission was to save the South from both integration and communism, came to Tennessee to inform that state's legislators that Highlander was harboring a nest of subversives, and they'd best investigate. They did, with great fanfare. (For more details on the attack on Highlander, see *Southern Exposure*, Vol. VI, No. 1, Spring, 1978.)

Probably the most high-powered attack of all was aimed at Jack O'Dell, staff member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and one of the best organizers and fundraisers that organization had. He had been called before HUAC in Atlanta in 1958. It was John Kennedy himself who took Martin Luther King, Jr., aside during a White House conference and told him SCLC had to get rid of O'Dell.

The interesting thing is that none of these people or groups that were targets of these attacks were advocating anything very radical. We were supporting the goals of the Freedom Movement, and that's all. SCEF, for example, had a single-point program: the ending of segregation. When SCHW died after World War II, a handful of people led by long-time activists Jim Dombrowski and former New Deal official Aubrey Williams continued SCEF, formerly the educational arm of SCHW. They decided none of the economic issues SCHW had addressed could be dealt with adequately until there was an all-out assault on segregation. As the new black upsurge developed in the mid-'50s, SCEF more and more saw its job as reaching out to white Southerners to involve them in this struggle. It was the only regional organization that was doing so, with the exception of the Southern Regional Council — which did valuable work in bringing blacks and whites together to talk but was not as activist as SCEF and was among those that considered SCEF a red menace.

As SCLC and SNCC emerged, the various investigators pounced upon their associations with SCEF and Highlander to label them subversive too. For example, the Georgia Education Commission (set up in the '50s not to promote education in Georgia, as its name might indicate, but to preserve segregation) sent a disguised photographer to Highlander's twenty-fifth anniversary celebration in 1957, and he took a picture of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. That picture later appeared on billboards all over the South with the caption "Martin Luther King at Communist Training

School.” (Myles Horton, long-time Highlander director, tells of comments by student activists in the '60s after the fear of such things wore off. “That’s a terrible ad,” he quotes them as saying. “It doesn’t even give an address for the school.”)

The difference between SCEF and some other groups was that we never denied the charges. We saw it as a matter of principle. By the time Carl and I joined the SCEF staff in 1957, I am sure there was not a real live member of the Communist party on its board. But SCEF steadfastly refused to adopt a policy that one could *not* be. At a board meeting in the late '50s, some members asked the organization to adopt a policy excluding Communists. They said this was necessary for the organization to “survive,” and a long discussion ensued. Jim Dombrowski, who was then executive director and rarely talked in meetings, sat listening. Finally, he said: “I want to point out that we’ve spent all afternoon on this, while the violence of the segregationists is rising all around us. I’ve heard it said that if we don’t adopt this policy SCEF may not survive. I’m not sure it’s important whether SCEF survives — but I think it’s important that American democracy survive. If we adopt this policy we will be supporting the witch hunts that threaten to destroy any hope of democracy.” The question never came up again in SCEF in that period.

So SCEF continued as the whipping boy of the committees. The most innocent thing we did sometimes became sinister. For example, in 1962 Bob Moses, SNCC leader in Mississippi, invited Carl to come to the state and conduct workshops on civil liberties and nonviolence. Carl did so, and later wrote a routine work-report to Jim Dombrowski, who sent it to the SCEF board and advisory committee. There was a leak somewhere, and a few weeks later, the report turned up on the front page of the *Jackson Daily News*, with a banner headline: “Red Crusader Active in Jackson Mix Drive.”

That created consternation in the Atlanta offices of the Voter Education Project, which was funneling money into Mississippi, and in the Southern Inter-Agency Group, a meeting forum of civil-rights groups that had excluded SCEF from membership. The fury of these groups, interestingly, was not directed at the *Jackson Daily News*, but at us. Before it was over, SCEF found itself accused of deliberately sending Carl to Mississippi (and then leaking the report to the press) to stir up trouble.

By that time, SNCC was tending to ignore the witch hunters, and SCEF had a close relationship with the student movement. But it had not always been that way. When SNCC formed in 1960, the students soon heard that there were people who were dangerous and should be avoided. Charles Sherrod, one of the early activists, later described the effects: “Somebody said we should get in touch with that group, then we heard it was red, and somebody suggested another group, but we thought it might be red. Pretty soon we began looking at *each other* and wondering which bed they were under. Finally we decided to forget all that and go after segregation.”

But at the second SNCC conference in the fall of 1960, when the students were selecting organizations to have “observer status” at their meetings, there was a long debate as to whether to include SCEF (which they finally did). And in 1961, when SCEF wanted to help carry the inspira-

tion of the black student movement to white campuses and raised \$5,000 for SNCC to set up a “white student project,” they debated furiously whether to accept the money. They finally did so, and white Alabamian Bob Zellner went to work on the project — but only after withstanding pressure from Alabama’s attorney general, who called him in to warn him about “Communists” who were “using” the movement.

The pressures were great on people in our position to accept an assessment that we were a liability and to fade from view. I remember the fall of 1961, when Zellner, Bob Moses and others were in jail in McComb, Mississippi, and Jim Dombrowski raised \$13,000 in bail to get them out. Jim was planning to take the money to McComb. I happened to be in the Atlanta SNCC office the night before, and there people were worried about the effects of publicity around Jim’s trip. The fears were far from foolish fancy. All through that period, as Jim Forman reports in his book, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*, SNCC was being told by big foundations that they’d never get any money unless they quit associating with SCEF. I got caught up in the fears in Atlanta, called Jim and asked him to send the money but not to go — and he did that. I always regretted that phone call.

Later, the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC), a white group stimulated by SNCC, had the same problem. Those who formed SSOC turned to us for advice as they organized. But when they started looking for funds, Southern Regional Council leaders told them to stay away from us if they wanted to get any.

They did not do so entirely. One SSOC founder who had joined the SCEF board resigned as a gesture, but they kept in touch. Before the 1964 Summer Project, SSOC decided to set up a “White Folks Project” to try to reach poor white Mississippians. They planned their own training session during the SNCC orientation at an Ohio college. It was all financed by the National Council of Churches (NCC). SSOC asked Carl and me to serve as consultants. When we arrived, a SSOC activist met us at our car and said, “Let’s get out of here.” He whisked us away to a professor’s house — where we conducted a workshop, *sub*



rosa, and where it was explained that those running the training program had said we could not attend. Before I left, I saw Bob Moses on the campus. "I'm sorry," he said. "We fought a battle with NCC to get Myles Horton accepted as a participant, and the Lawyers Guild. You and Carl and SCEF were just more than we could win."

For this same training session, SNCC had ordered quantities of a major pamphlet I had just written on HUAC, outlining its dangers to the Civil Rights Movement. The pamphlets disappeared on the first day, and Bob Zellner asked an NCC official where they were. "I took them up," he replied — and the pamphlets were never seen again.

It was not just words that were used in these attacks. The Tennessee investigating committee admitted it could find nothing "subversive" about Highlander, but its sensational hearings set the stage for a court case against the school. It was eventually closed, and one fine night someone burned it to the ground. In 1963, the Louisiana committee instigated a raid on SCEF's main office in New Orleans, arrested its officers and took all its records, later turning them over to Senator Eastland. The charges were violation of Louisiana's anti-subversion law by belonging to groups (SCEF and the Lawyers Guild) listed by HUAC.

None of this destroyed the organizations under attack. The Lawyers Guild experienced a revival in this period. Highlander ultimately built a new center near Knoxville and thrives today. SCEF ultimately won the Louisiana case in the Supreme Court and became stronger, although the attacks continued throughout the '60s; it was only done in later through a different set of events that divided it in the early '70s.

But, overall, these attacks did weaken the Movement. One notable result was to scare away many white Southerners who might have participated. It was hard to convince blacks that their striving for freedom was a subversive plot, but many whites who could withstand economic pressure and physical danger were frightened by being called traitors to their country.

The real question, at this late date, is why. Since none of the groups under attack was really advocating communism,

what was the power structure afraid of?

In the wake of World War II, the U.S. power structure moved to establish what they called "the American Century" in the world and to roll back the small gains in power that had been won here by mass movements of the '30s; thus, Cold War abroad and witch hunts at home. In the late '40s and early '50s, many organizations pressing for broader human rights — including such militant black groups as the Southern Negro Youth Congress and the National Negro Labor Council — were crushed; the CIO was split and its most militant unions expelled, those that were the most anti-racist and committed to organizing the South; peace became a treasonous word; many people fell into inactivity; the "silent '50s" were upon us.

Thus, although there was always some "resistance movement" against the repression, by 1955 the country was essentially quiet on social issues. Then, all of a sudden, a new Freedom Movement burst forth, starting in Montgomery. The longing of black people to be free was just too powerful to be contained. In the midst of one of the most repressive periods of our history, it erupted anew — and ultimately broke the pall of the '50s and set this country's people in motion again in search of answers to social problems.

But the new Movement developed with no direct links to its predecessor movements. Without doubt, it was impoverished by that fact. For example, between 1937 and 1949, the Southern Negro Youth Congress (SNYC) had mobilized thousands of people, including workers it helped organize into unions. But it was a long time before anyone in SNCC even knew that just a decade before there had been a youth organization in the South with virtually the same initials as its own. Paul Robeson, spiritual leader of earlier struggles, sang across the South for trade unions and people's rallies in the '40s, but he never sang for the new student movement: by the early '60s, he was in exile, and even if he had not been, it is doubtful he would have been invited. (It was only after some struggle that SNCC decided to invite Pete Seeger — who had been attacked by HUAC — South to sing in the early '60s.) Also in exile was Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, one of the great moral giants of all time,

Tracy O'Neal

At left: This photograph, from a Louisiana Un-American Activities Committee report, was captioned, "Martin Luther King and three officers of SCEF previously identified as communists." At right: Otto Nathan and Anne Braden accompany Frank Wilkinson and Carl Braden to jail.



who just 15 years before had inspired a SNYC conference of 1,000 people in Columbia, South Carolina, with his "Behold the Land" speech, urging young people to stay in the South and transform it.

For its own reasons the Freedom Movement of the '50s and early '60s focused on simple issues – the symbols of racism in segregated public accommodations, the all-important right-to-vote. That made it different from the freedom organizations of the earlier period. None of them were "revolutionary" in any stereotyped sense, but their basic characteristic was that they merged the issues – racism with the struggles for world peace and against colonialism, and the struggle for economic justice. And since they related to an aggressive labor movement, they were building powerful coalitions. By the early '50s, it had come to be considered treasonous to suggest that our economic system might have flaws. For example, at Carl Braden's 1954 sedition trial, the prosecutor scared the jury by reading an article Carl had written saying unemployment was increasing in Louisville, which it was. "Does this mean, Mr. Braden," the prosecutor asked, "that you don't think our economic system works?"

The demands of the new Freedom Movement, although troublesome to Southern segregationists, ultimately could be absorbed by the society as it was. The real danger to those in power was the possibility that this Movement would turn to questions of economic justice and a new world view and make demands that would require basic changes in economic and political structures.

That's where I think we who were under the witch-hunting attacks came in. All of our organizations had roots in a period when the varied issues were seen as related. That made us potentially a threat – that, and the idea of black-white unity for change, which we *were* advocating.

In this context, we in SCEF saw our struggle for our right to be a part of the Movement as much more than an organizational thing. It was sometimes an embarrassing battle; there was always the haunting question, "Is it self-serving?" Yet instinctively we knew an important issue was at stake – the right of a social movement to explore, to hear ideas (even though we might not be expressing any dangerous ones), the right not to be fenced in. An historian asked me recently what role, if any, radicals (or "the left") played in the Southern Movement of the '50s and '60s. I guess we were what passed for radicals and "the left" at that time, and this article is my answer to the historian's question. Our role was to fight for our right to exist, to be recognized as a legitimate force.

So SCEF struggled consistently for its right to participate, and when attacks came we used them as platforms from which to reach people with our program of enlisting white Southerners in the anti-racist Movement. But we also explained in multiple papers, pamphlets and oral discussions our position on what we called "civil liberties," and their importance to civil rights. And we informed people about the role of the witch hunters and their committees.

Thus, when HUAC announced hearings in Atlanta in 1958, black SCEF leaders organized an open letter signed by 200 Southern black activists, demanding that the committee stay out of the South. It was the first open attack of that scope on HUAC anywhere, and as a result the National Committee to Abolish HUAC emerged; it led that fight for

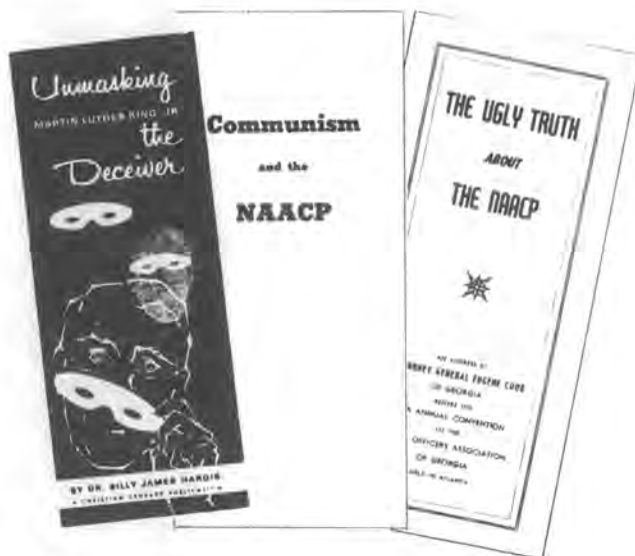
more than a decade and finally succeeded. In my opinion, HUAC's trip south in 1958 was the beginning of its end, for that brought black civil-rights forces together with white civil-libertarian forces, and the combination was unbeatable.

Carl Braden was subpoenaed to those Atlanta hearings, and he refused to answer any of HUAC's questions, saying "My beliefs and associations are none of the business of this committee" – that is, standing on the First Amendment. In 1961, he went to prison for a year for that position, after the Supreme Court upheld his contempt conviction, along with that of Frank Wilkinson, sparkplug of the movement to abolish HUAC. But by 1961, we had carried the campaign against HUAC all across the South, and during the year Carl was in prison I traveled about speaking on the subject. In the fall of 1961, SCEF sponsored a major conference in Chapel Hill on the theme "Freedom and the First Amendment," and several hundred people came, our first mass conference of this period. The new Movement was breaking through the fear.

As we struggled for the right to exist, we won some strong allies within the Movement, and there were important expressions of human courage. It took an additional dimension of bravery to defy those who shouted "traitor." Some people who could stand up to police dogs and cattle prods couldn't deal with this.

The Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, who led the mass movement that broke segregation in Birmingham, was one who had both kinds of courage. He met SCEF people in 1957, after his house was bombed and not long before he was almost killed trying to enroll his children in a segregated school. He began to work closely with SCEF, joined its board, invited it to hold Birmingham's first integrated conference in over 20 years, and never let anybody tell him to stay away from us.

In 1963, at the height of the Birmingham Movement, Fred accepted election as president of SCEF. He was also a founder of SCLC and was then its secretary. In his book *My Soul Is Rested*, Howell Raines notes that after the big Birmingham demonstrations in 1963, Fred was never again accorded his previous prominent position in SCLC.



Raines thinks this was because he disagreed with Martin King over tactics in Birmingham and was never forgiven for this by King's aides. My own opinion is that, if indeed Fred's SCLC status changed, it was because this was also when he was elected president of SCEF.

Fred knew there might be concern in SCLC about his election. He still tells about how he broke the news to SCLC leaders. He, Martin, Ralph Abernathy and Andrew Young were on their way to a speaking engagement. "Oh, I want to tell you," Fred reports the conversation, "I have been elected president of SCEF, and I have accepted. Now I know some people may feel that causes problems for SCLC, and if you think it does, I will resign . . . from SCLC."

Martin hastened to assure him that this was not necessary. Although there was apparently divergence of opinion within SCLC on this issue, Martin himself always rejected the witch hunters' attempts to isolate SCEF. He defied a barrage of criticism to initiate a clemency petition as a protest when Carl went to prison in the HUAC case. Soon after Carl left prison in 1962, I was invited to speak at the annual SCLC convention in Birmingham. It was a strange invitation; I was asked to speak on nonviolence, and there were plenty of people in SCLC more expert on that than I. Martin said he added my name to the speakers' list because there were no women on it, and he didn't think that was right. But there were plenty of other women available too. When I spoke, the presiding officer asked Carl and Jim Dombrowski, who were in the audience, to come to the stage also; and after I finished what I think was a quite mediocre speech, Martin himself came to the stage to give an "appreciation." I think it was his way of saying to the world that he was not going to be a part of the witch hunt or be intimidated by it.

It also provided the witch hunters with one new weapon. A picture was taken that day showing Martin at the microphone with Carl and Jim and me in the background. Later that fell into the hands of the Louisiana Un-American Activities Committee, and they published it with great fanfare in a three-volume dossier on SCEF. During hearings, the committee counsel announced that the committee had

communicated with Dr. King to give him an "opportunity" to clear his name by repudiating SCEF. But, the counsel said sadly, "No answer whatsoever was received from Martin Luther King."

For those of us who knew Martin, that was no surprise.

Ella Baker, long-time NAACP organizer and unofficial "godmother" of SNCC, was another who challenged the witch hunt. Carl and I met her during our 1950s sedition case when she stepped out of the role dictated by NAACP policies and organized support for us. In early 1960, she and Carl worked together on a voting-rights hearing in Washington, despite pressure on her to stay away from it. She told the students that they must not be afraid of those the power structure told them to fear. "The problem in the South," she said, "is not radical thought, or even conservative thought; it's lack of thought. We've got to break that pattern, and we can't do it by letting the opposition tell us whom to associate with."

Another person who took a courageous lead was the Reverend Wyatt Tee Walker, executive director of SCLC in the early '60s. It was Wyatt who argued at that 1960 SNCC meeting that it should not exclude SCEF from its observers. In 1962, Wyatt got sold on the idea of having a big conference in Atlanta that would bring all the civil-rights and related groups together to say "no" to witch-hunting. The proposed conference was the idea of Eliza Paschall, then leader of Atlanta's Human Relations Council.

Both Eliza and Wyatt learned some facts of life when they started trying to enlist support from other organizations. The Southern Regional Council, which Eliza was sure would go along, equivocated for months — and finally said no, as I knew they would, since at that time they were part of the problem, not of the solution. That didn't faze Wyatt, because he was sure he could get support from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). He wrote their national office in New York, then went to see them — and waited all one afternoon in an anteroom without ever seeing anybody in authority. He came back to Atlanta furious.

Dottie Miller (later Dottie Zellner, then on the SNCC staff) told me about Wyatt's report to her. At that time, SCLC was very close to President Kennedy.

All civil-rights organizations in those days were called communist by the segregationists, and the investigating committees actually attacked them all. For example, the Florida committee did a report on the NAACP, quoting HUAC files on 145 "subversive" citations of NAACP leaders, and Georgia published this as a pamphlet. When CORE brought the Freedom Rides south, Senator Eastland inserted into the Congressional Record a long list of HUAC citations against CORE activists.



"Can you imagine," Dottie laughed. "He's got an open door to the White House, and he can't get into the ACLU."

With doors of the more "respectable" organizations closed, the proposed Atlanta conference never happened. Instead, the next summer, 1963, Ella Baker organized a workshop on the topic, sponsored by SCEF; both SNCC and SCLC supported it, and lots of activists came. The ideas discussed there — the importance of rejecting all labels and claiming the freedom to explore all ideas — were spreading slowly through the movement.

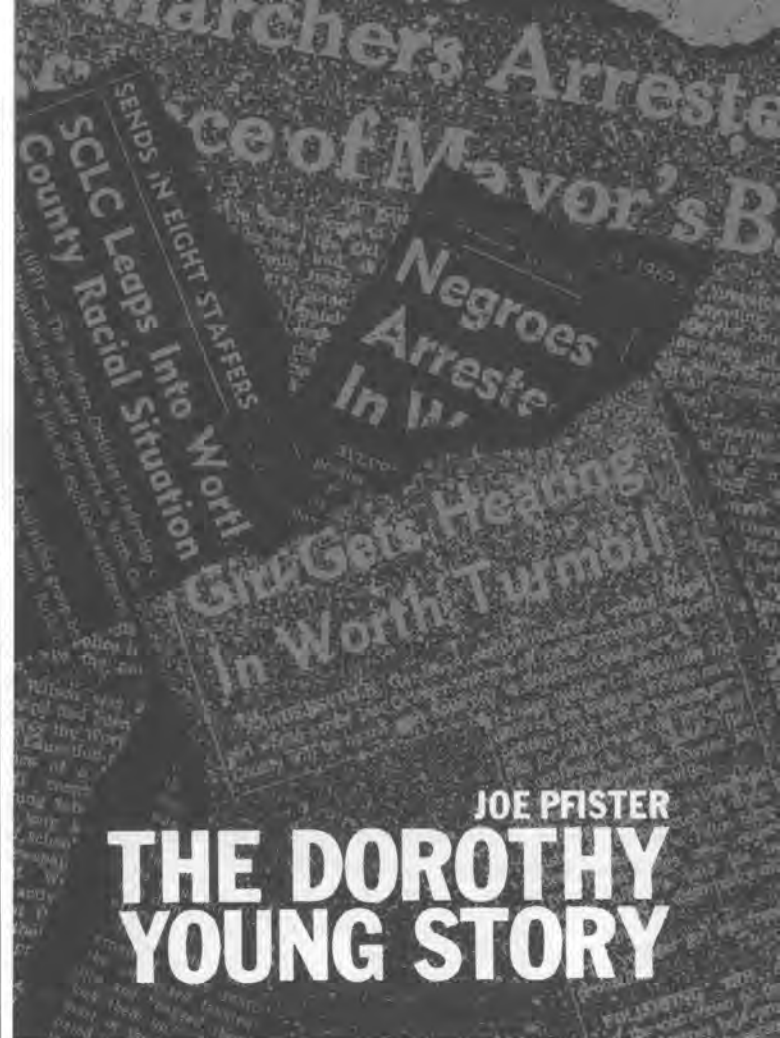
Only a few years later, of course, the Movement and the country changed in profound ways. The mass movements generated by the black upsurge in the South swept away much of the fear, pulled the fangs of HUAC, and created an atmosphere in which people's movements were setting the country's agenda. The Freedom Movement, despite the efforts of those in power to confine it to narrow issues, burst out of the set bounds again — and did indeed move on to economic issues, the issue of war and challenges to the political structure. SNCC moved in that direction when it supported the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in its refusal to compromise with politics-as-usual at the National Democratic Convention in 1964; it was at that moment that the attacks began that eventually destroyed SNCC. SCLC moved in that direction when Dr. King came out against the Vietnam War, later called on people of all colors to join a Poor People's Campaign, and went to Memphis to support striking workers.

What with mass movements now having burst the established parameters, those trying to control the society apparently knew the old methods had failed. "Words can never hurt me, but sticks and stones may break my bones." Those who wanted to keep things basically as they were turned to other methods of repression in the late '60s and early '70s — but that's another story.

Now as the 1980s begin, rumblings of yet another period of repression are coming out of Washington — and new people's movements are emerging. But the movements of this decade start from a very different point from those of the '50s and '60s, and it is to be hoped that they will not let any reincarnations of the witch-hunting committees deter them from their path. □

Anne Braden is a journalist who has been active for more than three decades in Southern movements for social justice. She is currently co-chairperson of the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice and a vice-chairperson of the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression. She worked on the staff of SCEF from 1957 to 1973, and edited its publication, the Southern Patriot.

Braden and SOC are planning to begin a New Southern Patriot, a broad, nonsectarian Movement newspaper. People interested in contributing to the new publication should contact her at P.O. Box 11308, Louisville, Ky. 40211.



JOE PFISTER THE DOROTHY YOUNG STORY

*They say that Freedom is a constant sorrow,
They say that Freedom is a constant sorrow,
They say that Freedom is a constant sorrow,
Oh, Lord, we've struggled so long,
We must be free, we must be free.*

(Freedom song composed by member of the Young family, Worth County, Georgia, 1966)

Media coverage has played an essential part in the planning and development of Movement organizations. At the local level, civil rights organizations are composed primarily of poor people whose only real resources are themselves. To make the most of themselves as resources, they rely heavily on events which highlight injustices and attract media attention.

Newspaper and television coverage in the '60s by local Southern media was often biased toward the existing power structures and seldom adequate to the task of providing balanced and fair reporting of the civil-rights struggle. By and large editors and station owners were part and parcel of the segregated system. The media had the power to make events happen or not happen in the eyes of the public. When one radio station in Dawson, Georgia, claimed, "If you haven't heard it on WDWD, it hasn't happened," there was more going on than just bragging rights for news coverage. News blackouts, distortion of facts, selective use of information were all important to the effort of local establishments to keep control of their communities by regulating the flow of information.

In this climate, it is no wonder that it was difficult to get

the word out about voter-registration work, courtroom struggles, demonstrations and organizing. If groups attracted national media, people across the country would be more likely to know what was going on than folks in the next county.

In 1968 in southwest Georgia, there were 26 radio stations, one television station, one daily newspaper and a host of small-town local newspapers. Three established white families controlled half of the radio stations, and one man was both editor of the daily newspaper and owner of the television station. These families owned plantations and businesses, and participated on boards of organizations with vested interests in maintaining segregation and economic discrimination against blacks.

An example of outright distortion of news took place in the spring of 1968. Junior Nelson, a 17-year-old black youth, was shot to death by a white storeclerk in the small town of Warwick, Georgia. According to a number of witnesses from the black community, Nelson had been trying to break up a fight between a friend of his and a Warwick police officer who had taunted the friend while arresting him for drinking a beer in public. The clerk came out of the store and struck Junior Nelson, knocking him down. When he angrily got back to his feet, the clerk shot him. Nelson lay for approximately half an hour on the street with a bullet wound in his abdomen, while a group of whites armed with guns encircled him letting no one, not even the boy's mother, come to his aid. Eventually Junior Nelson was hauled off to the Worth County Hospital, not in an ambulance but in a police car, and he died. But the next day the local radio, television and newspapers carried the story that Junior Nelson had attacked the clerk with a knife, and the clerk had shot in self-defense.

The clerk was never arrested or indicted. The black community of Worth County organized a boycott of Griffin's Grocery, where he worked. Fearing reprisals, so the story goes, the clerk mowed his yard with a shotgun in one hand. Eventually he moved away from Warwick. However, despite much clamor from the black community about the incident, the news media never looked further into the story of the shooting of Junior Nelson.

Distortion was only one way the local media made things difficult for blacks. Media also blacked out news — ignoring it altogether — or chose only to select certain sources of information. Such incomplete and imbalanced reporting is typified by the story of Dorothy Young and her family during their struggle with school desegregation in 1968 and 1969.

In the '60s, the response of Southern states to the demands of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of the Supreme Court was the "freedom of choice" system. Under this system students were permitted to enroll at the school of their choice in their school district, provided that their choice did not increase segregation. The initiative to desegregate the schools was left with individual families, and the pressures against exercising this "freedom of choice" were enormous. As a result only a handful of black students enrolled at white schools, and virtually no white students enrolled in the black schools.

The few pioneer black families who dared to send their children to the better-funded and equipped white schools did so knowing that they were not welcome and that they would suffer daily abuses. These families tended to be landowners and farmers who did not have to fear losing



Joe Pfister

Above: Mrs. Ida Mae Young talks to protestors outside Worth County Courthouse; below: Dorothy Young in State Youth Detention Center, Sandersville, Georgia.



Joe Pfister

their jobs or homes in reprisal for their activities.

One such family was that of Leroy and Ida Mae Young of Worth County, Georgia. The Young family had long been active in the Civil Rights Movement in the southwest Georgia area, working tirelessly in voter-registration drives and welfare rights organizing and providing support and encouragement for other families in the Movement throughout the county. They took the risk of housing fieldworkers from SNCC, the Southwest Georgia Project (a regional civil-rights resource organization) and other "outside agitators." On their 150-acre farm they raised vegetables, hogs and chickens. Leroy's two brothers, Sonny and James, had adjacent small farms and with the combined machinery and labor of three families they raised and marketed cotton, soy beans, peanuts, corn and other crops. Leroy also held a job with a fertilizer plant outside of Worth County.

The Youngs took the courageous step of sending their children to the white schools of Worth County. Fourteen-year-old Dorothy was among the first blacks to enroll at an all-white school in the county. She remembers the torrent of abuses suffered by her and the others who enrolled with her in the seventh grade of Warwick Elementary School:

The first year was real bad because there were only three of us in the school. They treated us terrible. They [white students] would kick you and hit on you. And the teachers were bad, too. We had one teacher when I was in the seventh grade that whenever we made a good grade on a test or something, she would show it before the whole class and say, "Before I would let them beat me I'd go to Pokimo and hide my head and never come up."

On December 4, 1968, Dorothy and her younger sister Yvonne, age 11, were picked up from school by the deputy sheriff of Worth County and taken to the Albany Detention Home, the juvenile center in Dougherty County, 25 miles away.

I was walking down the hall to class and the principal called me to his office. So I went and he said to come go with him. I asked where we were going. He told me not to ask any questions, just come on! Then he grabbed me by the coat behind my neck and took me out to a car. He took my purse and searched it. I don't know what he was looking for. And my little sister Yvonne was out there crying. I asked him where he was taking us and he said, "Shut up and don't ask any questions." He didn't tell us where we were going. We went to Albany. I didn't know where we were but I found out we were in a juvenile home. I didn't know why we were there, and I didn't find out until I read it in the paper and heard it on the radio. We stayed there seven days.

Mr. and Mrs. Young did not learn of their daughters' whereabouts until the following day when their attorney, C.B. King (then the only black lawyer in southwest Georgia), located them by phoning the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in Atlanta.

Dorothy and Yvonne were charged with "being in a state of delinquency." Yvonne had come to the defense of her younger brother, who had been kicked in the shins by a white boy; Dorothy was accused of using "vile, obscene and profane language" without just cause. A white boy had been throwing spitballs at her and taunting her. She had told him to stop. The boy had called her "nigger," and she had told him to "kiss my ass." They were held in the detention home for seven days, during which their parents

"CHICKEN DIPS SNUFF!"

The Albany Herald's biased coverage of the Dorothy Young story may be logically derived from the editorial policy of the editor-publisher of the paper, James H. Gray, Jr., the current mayor of Albany. Mayor Gray probably has had more influence over the mass media of southwest Georgia than any other individual. Besides being the editor and publisher of the newspaper, Gray owns or, through Gray Communications, Inc., has controlling interest in WALB, the local NBC affiliate television station which

is seen in all 20 counties of the southwest Georgia area, plus television stations in Florida, Arkansas and Louisiana. He recently had to give up control of Gray Cablevision in Albany as a result of anti-trust and FCC actions.

James Gray has long been known as an avowed segregationist, and his racist actions have left their stamp on Albany and the state of Georgia. In May of 1962, when it became evident that the Tift Park public swimming pool in Albany would be integrated, he bought it and reopened it for whites only. During the massive demonstrations and sit-ins in Albany in 1961 and 1962, the Herald made fun of events that were shaking the entire country. When 75 clergy from various parts of the country gathered in Albany to demonstrate their support of the many who had gone to jail to protest injustices to blacks, the Herald came out with headlines like:

"Crowd Cheers As Cops Clap Clerical Crowd in Calaboose." In a Newsweek article in September, 1962, Gray had this to say: "The racial problem in Albany has been overemphasized. It's not a real story." Commenting on the reliability of his newspaper, he said "The Herald reflects the attitude of Albany. . . . If the Herald says a chicken dips snuff, you can lift its leg and find a box of it there." Gray was also selected by "axhandle" governor Lester Maddox as the Georgia State Democratic Chairman for the 1968 election. He headed the Georgia delegation whose credentials were successfully challenged by Julian Bond and a "challenge delegation" over the issue of fair representation at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. When the challenge delegation was given the right to half of the seats allotted the Georgia delegation, Gray and Maddox walked out of the convention. □

were not allowed to visit, and no bond was set. Judge Bowie Gray, who had signed the petition authorizing the arrests, refused to speak with an assistant to attorney King.

They locked me up in a room and wouldn't let me talk to nobody. They said the less you say in here the better it will be for you. I thought I wasn't never going to get out of there. They used to treat me like an old dog. They wouldn't give me no covers [for the bed] at all. During the day they took the mattress away while I was locked up in the room. They didn't want you laying in the bed. The FBI came to see me. They wouldn't let nobody else come to see me, but they let the FBI. And they tried to trick me. They said, "Now, come on, you can tell us the truth. We're not going to tell nobody. Didn't you curse them little white girls out and beat that white boy up." I said, "Does my lawyer know y'all are here." "Yeah, yeah, we have his permission." I told them I didn't believe it and they said I could still talk to them. "It is just between us and you." But I wouldn't talk to them.

After a hearing, Yvonne was released on probation, but Dorothy was sentenced to the state youth detention system for an undetermined sentence of anywhere between three months and six years. The case was appealed, but the judge would not allow Dorothy to go home either in the custody of her parents or on bail. Then her attorneys filed a writ of *habeus corpus* in state and federal courts to have Dorothy released. The *habeus corpus* appeal failed on the state level but was granted by the federal court, and after nearly three months Dorothy went home. The white youths involved were not punished in any way.

In the court ruling, U.S. District Judge Newell Edenfield said:

Here the minor child involved was adjudged a delinquent on a charge of having used vile, obscene and profane language. . . . An adult charged with similar misconduct, even a hardened criminal or the town drunk, could, at most, be guilty of only a misdemeanor and would be entitled to bond pending appeal. The court concludes that to say the very least there is sufficient merit . . . to require that bail pending appeal be allowed.

In a related incident on December 20, two weeks after Dorothy and Yvonne's arrest, Leroy, Jr. —their 16-year-old brother — was arrested for shooting at a car with two young white "hunters" in it. The two had made a few passes at the Young home and had shot at it. No one was injured in the shootings.

During this three-month period, the black community of Sylvester and the surrounding Worth County was in an uproar. They saw the actions against Dorothy and her family as revenge on the part of the school officials and law enforcement authorities for the embarrassment caused them by the school desegregation efforts. The Worth County Improvement League held nightly meetings and planned and carried out marches and demonstrations protesting the arrests of Dorothy, Yvonne and Leroy, Jr. They demanded their release and black representation on the school board and local governing bodies. In the series of marches and protests, over 100 people, primarily youths, went to jail to dramatize the injustices.



Joe Pfister

Above: Ida Mae at home in Warwick, Georgia; below: demonstrators march at Woods County Courthouse.



Joe Pfister

As a result of these demonstrations and a school boycott, there was considerable coverage of the events by the news media. Reports were published in newspapers ranging from the local Sylvester and Albany papers to the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. The news articles began appearing only after the demonstrations started, some five days after Dorothy and Yvonne were arrested. It is quite conceivable that there would not have been any news coverage were it not for the demonstrations and the organizing work done by the Worth County Improvement League with the impetus of the fired-up high school students.

However, there was a considerable difference between the news coverage by the local papers, *The Sylvester Local* and the *Albany Herald*, and the coverage given by papers in Atlanta and New York.

The *Sylvester Local*, a weekly publication, was closest to the scene. Although the events continued for seven weeks, only two articles appeared in the *Local*, and only one of them dealt directly with the demonstrations. The first ran over a month after the arrests of Dorothy and Yvonne and a full four weeks after the demonstrations and school boycott began. The front-page headline read: "Parents are Warned on School Absences," and the article consisted

of an interview with the superintendent of schools in which he expressed concern over the high rate of absentees, particularly among black students, and reminded parents that all children between the ages of seven and 16 were required by law to attend school. The remainder of the article elaborated on the background and qualifications of the new superintendent.

The next week the *Local* ran a front-page article with the headline "More Marchers Arrested in Defiance of Mayor's Ban" and a subhead stating "Lawhorne [the mayor of Sylvester] Vows to Keep Order." This article featured the mayor and the superintendent of schools stating how they were going to keep order in Sylvester. There was a reference made to reports that the Improvement League was "seeking for the 14-year-old Negro girl's release," and that the charges be dropped against her older brother "accused of shooting at two young hunters."

The *Local* seemed to have disregarded the fact that when there is controversy or confrontation, there are at least two points of view to be considered. The *Local* never talked to Dorothy or her parents or any of the hundreds of students involved. They did not talk to the Worth County Improvement League even though the League's office was only three blocks from their own. They even chose to ignore the

ROB HOOKER DEFENDERS OF ORTHODOXY

Southern orthodoxy had no stauncher champion than the Jackson, Mississippi, *Daily News*, the afternoon paper in the state capital. Its editorial philosophy, which often spilled over into its news columns, was clearest in the front-page columns of editor James M. (Jimmy) Ward. The columns were concoctions of folksy humor, homespun philosophy and devastating attacks. To the *Daily News*, civil-rights workers were "agitators" and their leaders "money-filchers." Federal officials were "meddlers," the Supreme Court a "pernicious pestilence." States' rights were sacrosanct, as was Mississippi's image.

In Meridian, third largest city in Mississippi, *Star* editorial writers also drew deeply from the vat of racial wrath. The editor, James B. Skewes, was a shy, introverted man, said to leave the day-to-day operations to his lieutenants; but when race was the issue, *Star* editorials were never bland. They spoke ominously of "mongrelization" and "pollution of our blood."

The Supreme Court, the *Star* warned, was trying to "pollute the very blood in our veins — to destroy one of the things we hold most sacred — our racial integrity."

When James Meredith attempted to enter the all-white University of Mississippi in 1962, the *Daily News* and the *Star* stood four-square behind Governor Ross Barnett and resistance to the federal government. The governor's action in physically blocking the doors, declared the *Star*, was "beyond mere praise." Resistance was mandatory: if anyone were jailed for resisting, his cell would be "a temple of courage and honor." In the *Daily News*, editor Ward's column recommended that Attorney General Robert Kennedy retire and devote "FULL time as legal advisor to the NAACP," called Meredith "the boy," and deplored the "sledge-hammer tactics" of the "feds."

As the crisis deepened, editorial opinion increasingly slipped into the news pages of the *Star* and the *Daily News*. In the latter, stories written as President Kennedy toyed with the idea of sending in federal marshals included references to "a possible invasion," a pending "government attack," and a "government 'goon squad' of 50 to 100 marshals." The *Daily News* ran a front-page story about a cross-burning on the campus, allegedly to protest Meredith's plans.

University officials later charged that the cross-burning had been staged by "a Jackson newspaper" to inflame feelings.

The day after Barnett blocked Meredith's attempt to register at the university's Jackson office, *Star* headlines said, "Meredith and G-Men Knock But Barnett Blocks Door" and "Crowd Cheers 'Good News,' Boos Meredith." The *Daily News*, meanwhile, packaged its Meredith coverage alongside articles by columnist Jack Lotto — for example, "Comies Using Negro As Tool" — and stories about black crime and rioting.

Meredith's admission, and the tragic rioting, changed the *Star* and the *Daily News* not one whit. The state was the innocent victim of an arrogant invasion, they said; political resistance should continue. Federal troops monopolized the *Daily News*' lead story, and a page-one headline said, "Negro Troops Set Off Oxford Battle," but there was nothing in the story to that effect. That same day, a front-page editorial in the *Star* predicted: "If our spirit is ever broken and we become apathetic about integration, this evil shall constantly increase until it becomes massive and complete rather than token, and we shall face eventual mongrelization of the races." □

Rob Hooker is deputy metro editor of the St. Petersburg Times.

arrival of prominent civil-rights leaders such as Ralph Abernathy of SCLC, Horace Tate (then president of the Georgia Teachers Education Association) and state senator Leroy Johnson.

The *Albany Herald*, southwest Georgia's only daily newspaper, gave more extensive coverage of the events in Worth County: 14 articles in all, including two feature articles and a number of AP and UPI releases. Front-page coverage was given twice with small headlines. Headlines such as the following appeared: "Worth County Schools Close," "Negroes Arrested in Worth," "Negro Student Boycott Appears Over in Worth." This latter headline appeared a full month before the demonstrations actually wound down, about the time when the *Herald* ceased its coverage.

With one or two meager exceptions there were no references to the position of the Worth County black community, but even these were only alleged references picked up by the *Herald* from wire services. The *Herald* also relied almost exclusively on sources within the school system and law enforcement agencies of Worth County. In the seven articles printed by the *Herald* which were not AP or UPI releases, the sources mentioned in order of the frequency of their appearance were as follows: the Worth County Superintendent of Schools, "school officials," Judge Bowie Gray, "authorities," the Sylvester Police, Worth County Sheriff Hudson, Deputy Sheriff Prichard, "white leaders," Sylvester Mayor Thomas Lawhorne and the Sylvester City Court Judge. There were no first-hand reports from the black community.

The *Herald* seemed preoccupied with the national news media's presence on the scene in Sylvester. One feature article dismissed it three times:

Much of the current controversy concerns two Negro girls, the object of national press attention and the daughters of a family living near Warwick. The sisters, 14 and 11, have been termed chronic "troublemakers."

The girls were subjects of publicity in the New York Times and the Washington Post, as well as both Atlanta daily newspapers. Worth Countians said the big-city newspaper reports were often distorted and much press criticism unjustified.

The *Herald* also quoted Judge Gray, who had sentenced Dorothy:

"Sensational publicity, untruths and half-truths have spread far and wide. . . . False accounts in some over-anxious newspapers as to what the facts are resulting in unfavorable publicity, school boycotts and demonstrations designed to create pressure will not accomplish anything for the correction and rehabilitation of these children. The court is not affected by such things whatsoever."

Two Atlanta daily papers, the afternoon *Journal* and the morning *Constitution*, which publish a joint paper on Sundays, carried 17 articles between them on the Dorothy Young story. Besides wire stories, they published a number of feature stories and assigned staff writers to cover the events. The Atlanta papers had nine feature articles compared to the *Herald's* two. Five of these were printed on the first page, one with banner headlines. Articles had such headlines as, "Worth Negroes Urge Probes, Map Protests,"

"19 Arrested in Worth School Protests," "Negroes Chant for Release of Worth Girl," and "U.S. Court Orders Worth Girl Freed." The last item wasn't even covered by the *Herald*.

Furthermore, the coverage was considerably more balanced, quoting Dorothy's parents, representatives of the Worth County Improvement League and a number of state black leaders. C.B. King, Dorothy's attorney, was quoted several times. He was referred to as "Albany Attorney, C.B. King" by the *Constitution* and *Journal*, whereas to the *Herald* he was invariably "Albany Negro Attorney. . . ." The demands of the Improvement League were stated several times alongside the statements by Worth County officials. The Atlanta papers reported that state senator Leroy Johnson and state representative Ben Brown intended to investigate the events. One article noted that school officials justified their failure to punish the white hecklers because Dorothy was involved in repeated incidents, but with different white students each time; the article went on to explain:

The Southern Regional Council in Atlanta reports that one school system operating under the freedom of choice plan had a rule that any student regardless of race will be expelled after four incidents. The SRC said that in this particular case white students teamed up in groups of four, each picking a fight with the same Negro on different days. After four fights, the Negro was expelled and whites had only one incident logged on their records.

Thus this February 12 article linked the Dorothy Young story to the problems of desegregation throughout the South.

Accounts also appeared in the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, and although fewer in number, they went into greater depth. They described the home of the Youngs and the background of Dorothy's parents. They highlighted the unreasonable nature of Dorothy's and Yvonne's arrest and linked it to the family's participation in civil-rights activities. They reported the Youngs' account of the shooting incident involving older brother Leroy. Ironically, the further away the publication was from the scene of the events, the more balanced was the reporting.

After her release, Dorothy Young returned home as something of a heroine. She flew home on a plane chartered by SCLC and was accompanied by Andrew Young and Ralph Abernathy, who made a speech to the black community assembled in Sylvester to welcome her home.

Today, Dorothy lives in Birmingham with her husband Chico Rivera and their son Inyea. Another child is on the way. She worked for a while at a commercial bakery, where she became the shop steward of the union local and was instrumental in getting some changes in health conditions. She quit that job for a better-paying job in the coal mines. She took training courses in handling mining equipment and was hired, but only after filing a sex discrimination suit against the mining company. □

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JOHN O'NEAL

ART AND THE MOVEMENT

August, 1964: Imagine that you are a black high school student in Bogalusa, Louisiana. It is a hot, muggy Wednesday night. You are about to watch a play. The play will be performed by the Free Southern Theater, but not from a written script.

The play tonight is about Bogalusa itself. The cast includes not only the members of the FST but some of your classmates, many of whom have participated in protest marches during the summer. A huge crowd has gathered at the union hall despite the heat. It is as if the entire black community has come, plus the several CORE workers who have been in town, and others from neighboring towns.

From where you are standing you can see there are as many people outside as inside, even the windows are crowded with eager faces. Outside across the dirt road, the police chief leans against his automobile talking with several of his deputies. The chief is not sure what a play is, but he is present in case any "trouble" develops. Anyway, amidst the excitement no one pays attention to the police. The Deacons for Defense of Equality and Justice are also present. They had escorted the Free Southern Theater without incident from McComb, Mississippi, and will provide a protective caravan of cars tomorrow morning when the company leaves for New Orleans.

After a brief introduction by Gilbert Moses, who explains this will be an improvised play, the scenes begin. The play is about the demonstrations in Bogalusa that summer, about the violence in Bogalusa and the inflexibility of the mayor, his city council and the police in the face of that violence, and about the determination of black citizens to fight back, to fight for their rights and to take action to ensure their safety while protesting for their rights.

The audience responds to the subtleties, humor, truth of every situation as it develops on the makeshift stage. And you too respond though you are not sure this is a great play or that plays should be about something like this. The plays by the Central High School drama club in Bogalusa are certainly not like this. But nevertheless this play is about your life, your problems, what you have been through — and you have heard truths stated tonight which have only been whispered in Bogalusa. And you wished the police chief (who is probably outside wondering what all the shouting, laughter, excitement is about), the mayor, every white person in Bogalusa could be in the union hall tonight to see themselves portrayed as they really are.

— Tom Dent*

Culture played an important role in the Movement. There was drama and poetry, exceptional photography and an abundance of good graphic design work. Tall-tale telling was raised to new heights (which is one reason it's so hard for historians to get a clear idea of what the facts actually were). This highly developed storytelling tradition in the South serves as the foundation for the remarkable improvisational art of the preacher. Some of the finest political oratory ever created rolled from the rapturous lips of Movement pastors inspired by the passion of their congregations. And there was music! Organized and spontaneous, professional and traditional. People's music. The people gave form to emotions too deeply felt for speaking by making songs, or shouting or humming or moaning—

*I don't know why I have to moan sometimes
I don't know why I have to moan sometimes
It would be a perfect day, but there's trouble
all in my way
I don't know why, but I'll know by and by.*

As we reflect on the role of culture in the Civil Rights Movement, we must be mindful of how easy and pleasant it is to make romance of the past. In romance, we tend to exaggerate the emotional extremes at the expense of fact. This is not a helpful tendency. However much fun it may be to recount tales of ancient glory and shame, the value in the examination of information about past events is to help us discover patterns from which we can draw lessons for the future.

A few general observations:

- Since art can stand no taller than the philosophical ground upon which it rests, the art work of the '60s is limited by the philosophical shortsightedness of the Movement itself.
- The art and literature of black artists intellectually grounded in the period between 1918 and 1940 are generally superior to the work of artists from the '60s because of the stronger philosophical ground that oriented the movement their work reflects.
- The interplay of ideas about culture and art that occurred during the '60s is more important than the actual accomplishments of artistic work done. Consequently, the art is more important as historical data than as aesthetic product.
- The strongest art work is that which is most deeply rooted in the folklife and traditions of the people for whom the work is created.
- The connection between the content of the work and the audience is critical. The people are the ones who make the music and the artists are the instruments they play.
- The popular art, controlled by entrepreneurs whose interests are distinct from, if not contradictory to, the interests of the masses of people, has been more influential than anything Movement artists have yet created.
- Movement artists, like the Movement itself, tended to ignore the economic terms which limit and define possibility.

* Excerpted from *Freedomways*, Volume 6, Number 1 (1965).

Now a summary of the experiences upon which these ideas are based.

It didn't matter that most of the marquees were for second-rate skin flicks. It didn't matter that we had said to each other time and time again, "Broadway's a pointless exercise in decadence!" There we were! In *The Big Apple!* In spite of everything, my partner, Gilbert Moses, and I were standing in the busiest part of the Great White Way and excited to be there. There was romance and excitement that caught me by surprise.

Our object was to recruit people to join the effort to build the Free Southern Theater in Mississippi. Armed only with what we thought was the most important artistic idea of the decade, we were on the way to meet a group of actors. Of the several people we talked to that night, I remember one actor of exceptional ability. We'd seen him perform earlier that evening. He was just the kind of person we needed.

After we'd run down our naive but enthusiastic rap, the actor was almost as excited as we were. "You guys have come up with a great idea!" he said, almost bursting. "I wish I could come down there to work with you, but I can't leave The City right now. I'M JUST ABOUT TO MAKE IT!"

Whenever I see that actor now, almost 20 years later, I can't resist the impish impulse to ask, "Hey, man, you made it yet?"

How many times we were to hear that refrain.

That encounter typifies the problem of the arts and the Civil Rights Movement. We were caught up in and driven by forces we did not understand.

With the shameless arrogance of innocence, we charged ahead with little respect for the struggles of our elders. "They couldn't have done much!" we told ourselves. "If they had we wouldn't have The Problem to deal with, would we?"

Like most of the youths who got involved in the Movement, I labored under the mistaken idea that the only thing wrong with America was that it didn't live up to its own standards. This idea placed severe limits on what the Movement could accomplish. It was particularly bad for artists. To create art of sustaining value, the artist must be grounded in a comprehensive and coherent view of the world. Mastery of skill, craft and style cannot make up for faults in basic conception.

The Movement was a good thing. Some important changes were won as a result of it. But if we aren't careful, we will make the mistake of separating the Movement from history. The '60s are like the third act in a drama that begins with the end of the Second World War and will likely end with some other definitive event of world-wide significance like the fall of South Africa.

Act One of this historical drama starts with demands to integrate the armed forces in the fight against Nazism. Japanese-Americans are marched off to concentration camps in California. Then the pointless atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It ends with race riots in the streets and Joe McCarthy beating the bushes for Communists.

Act Two takes up with the undeclared war against "Gooks and Chinks" in Korea, includes the Supreme Court decision deposing the doctrine of "separate but equal"



Larry Song

John O'Neal rehearsing for his play, "Junebug Jabbo Jones."

in favor of "all deliberate speed," goes on to the Mau-Maus in East Africa and ends with the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Act Three opens with the independence of Ghana, the sit-ins spreading like a prairie fire in brown grass, and jumps to the Freedom Rides. The price is paid in blood, but great moral victories are won. Legal sanction for segregation is withdrawn. It is an important but limited victory. With the March on Washington the initiative passes out of the hands of the Movement into the hands of a liberal/labor coalition that serves as the "loyal opposition" to Corporate America. Official Washington consolidates control over Movement leadership by putting them on the payroll in the War on Poverty. Those who can't be isolated, forced into exile or jailed are declared to be outlaws and are killed with or without the cover of law. Act Three ends with the assassinations of Malcolm X, the Panthers and MLK.

Act Four goes from the Poor People's March on Washington to Andy Young's rude end at the UN.

The resurgence of the Klan starts Act Five and some cataclysmic event like the fall of South Africa ends it.

As we struggled through what I've called Act Three, what we sought to be free *from* seemed clear. But, in all our terribleness, when the Movement tried to define the freedom *to* . . . the confusion spread all around. Answers to questions either faded off into infinite shades of gray or fell into bold and outrageous absurdities which were to be accepted on faith.

The Movement was not the product of a concept or program of social change. It was a spontaneous response to intolerable conditions. A great many people were mad enough to act simultaneously. It was the greatest strength and the greatest weakness at the same time. No single decapitating blow could stop it. But, as every good street-fighter knows, if you go into a fight mad, you'll probably lose. There's no guarantee that good thinking will win the fight, but it's almost certain that bad thinking will lose it.

It could not be said that our Movement was distinguished by the quality of its thought. It was dominated by philosophic chaos! That condition was probably one of the main reasons that the pragmatists were able to carry the day, pragmatism being as close as you can get to having no philosophy at all while maintaining a semblance of rationality. In profane exaggeration of the idea of democracy, anybody who didn't already know a philosophy that would suit his or her fancy was prompted to invent a new one.

In this philosophical disorder, Movement leadership — caught in a compelling sense of urgency — was defenseless

before the aggressive inadequacies of pragmatism. By the spring of 1963, a coalition of national civil-rights organizations held more power than had ever been achieved by a group of black persons in America. The best among them were awed by the power and carried it with a certain virginal innocence. But, as is often the case with virgins, the confrontation came. On one hand they faced formidable political, economic and police sanctions; on the other hand, they saw what appeared to be unlimited access to government resources.

In the made-for-TV movie about Martin Luther King (played by Paul Winfield), there was at least one brief moment that had the ring of truth. Martin is in the White House trying to get LBJ to support some pending legislation. Martin asserts the justice of his cause.

LBJ: *It's not about justice, Martin. It's about power. You give me a campaign bigger than Birmingham and I'll give you a Civil Rights Bill.*

MLK: *(Aghast) Dozens of people could be injured or killed!*

LBJ: *(Turning mournfully to look out the window at the Washington Monument) I order hundreds of people to their deaths every day, Martin. . . .*

According to the film, that's how the Selma-to-Montgomery March started.

The altruism that had characterized the early '60s faded into frustration, and frustration gave way to cynicism. By 1965, the Movement was effectively finished. A small but important minority, recognizing the insufficiency of reform, moved towards revolutionary ideologies. The majority, however, simply relinquished their claims to the high ideals that brought them to the Movement. Considering that they had paid their dues, many decided to step off the battlefield to join the establishment. Others simply dropped out.

We who work in the arts are supported by or limited by the social-political environment in which we work. When the political movement is doing well, many options and possibilities open up for us. Like every progressive political movement, the '60s liberated a great surge of creative energy. Regressive political trends tend to force the creative impulse into isolation. Dread, doom, fear, gloom and themes of sensual and erotic decadence juxtaposed to strident militarism come to the fore. Inevitably, as our Movement lost its orientation, so did most of our artists.

The general trend is especially evident in music. Music was one of the more important organizing tools of the Movement. It was used to inspire, educate, demonstrate, propagate and raise money. Every meeting had to begin and end with a song. The SNCC Freedom Singers became a popular attraction on campuses and in concert halls everywhere. In some cases traditional musicians appeared with the Freedom Singers. More often they traveled with seasoned performers like Pete Seeger and Dick Gregory. In order to structure the relationship between musicians and the Movement, the Folk Music Caravan was organized to produce concerts, festivals and other music activities in the South while continuing to work on fundraising.

The widespread interest in folk music that developed

was reflective of the potency of the grassroots social movement. It was a perfect analogy. The power of spontaneous social movement, like the power of music, is more intuitive than rational. To be a part of a group of hundreds or thousands of people, marching together, singing together, united in pursuit of a purpose greater than each, yet valuable to all, is a compelling experience. It is humbling and uplifting to hear the voice of 10,000 people come out when you open your own mouth to sing. Artists who participated in such experiences were always profoundly affected, and it influenced their work.

The Movement set the tone for the popular music of the day, too. Almost all of the popular music acts had one or two recordings of "message" music. Some acts, like the Impressions, built large portions of their repertoire on Movement themes. Jazz artists like Nina Simone made extensive use of Movement material. Max Roach's *Freedom Now Suite* with Abby Lincoln on vocals is classic. One of the reasons that the Little Rock school incident is fixed so firmly in my memory is that bassist Charlie Mingus satirized the governor of Arkansas so well with his *Fables of Faubus*.

Aside from the Freedom Singers and the Folk Music Caravan, the Free Southern Theater was the only organized cultural program that developed in the Southern Movement.* Theater is so verbal and so organizationally complex that it's especially important to be clear about what you're trying to do. At the FST we were forced to think about the Movement systematically. If we were to portray relevant themes and Movement people, we had to find out what gave them their particular character. We had to look for artistic models.

At first, we overlooked one of the best sources — the wealth of oral literature created by Afro-Americans — because it didn't fit into our idea of what theater was. There are parables and animal stories for teaching children, tall tales and bawdy rhymes for adults only and everything in between. This highly developed storytelling tradition in the South also encompasses the remarkable art of improvisational preaching, of which Martin Luther King, Jr., was one of the most notable masters.

Folk art is that area of art limited least by the shortcomings of Movement thought. Because it boils up from the realities of life faced by rural and urban workers, folk art is largely insulated from the extravagant abstractions of current theoretical trends.

Maybe it did sound hip as it dripped from the lip of some silvery-tongued orator, but most of the Movement mass meeters, being well-practiced churchgoers, knew that it takes just about as much energy to turn a pretty phrase as it takes to turn a shovelful of dirt.

The Movement gained far more from the rural and urban workers than it gave back as improvements in the quality of life. The main troops of the Movement were from the rural and urban working classes. The main leadership and most of the dominating ideas came from black professionals and small property holders. As it turned out, the classes which provided the leadership were the ones to get the

*Liberty House/Freedom Co-ops produced and distributed hand-crafted items. To a certain extent the Freedom Schools participated in the promotion and development of cultural activities. In the North, Operation Breadbasket developed a choir and a band. The Last Poets were a product of Movement activity in the North. The Folk Music Caravan was succeeded by the Southern Grass Roots Music Tour, which continues to produce festivals and tours.

main benefits also.

What is true in the political and economic sphere is generally reflected in the aesthetic sphere. Since the ideas of the Movement did not correspond to the realities that people had to live through, these ideas never did filter down and take root among the masses of the people. Little damage was done to the folk culture.

The literary product generated by the Movement is voluminous. Everybody tried to write poetry. There are dozens of biographical essays. Several collections of letters, diaries, reports, etc., have been assembled. Fiction, long and short, is relatively rare.

It may be that the most important art and literature from the period have not yet been published or distributed widely. Based on the available material, it seems that there is more historical than artistic value to be found in the cultural product of the '60s. Of the material that has been published the most important are those unself-conscious personal forms: letters, diaries, reports, etc. The record of direct experience will prove invaluable as source material for future work.

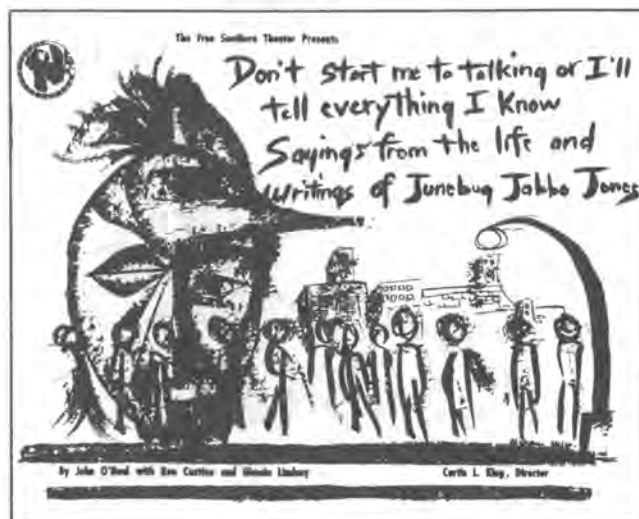
A lot of exceptional photographic and graphic design work was done during the Movement for two reasons. First, the graphics industry, like the music business, is highly structured and is a well-developed part of the mass media. Photographers and graphic artists who understand and have access to it can practice their craft and make adequate income at the same time. Second, graphics is not verbal and is therefore less threatening. Like musicians, graphic artists may use words but they are not dependent on them.

Because of the large investments required, large corporations operate virtually unchallenged in TV and film industries. Blacks who become involved to a significant degree tend to be those who accept the superiority of a "market to be exploited" over an "audience to be served." The main thing that happened in consequence of the Movement was that a few black people got jobs in the industry. When the Movement began to fade, so did the strong image of black people from the screen.

When the Movement was in the press every day, it acted as a magnet to people in the commercial entertainment industry and all other levels of cultural and artistic endeavor. As the Movement lost its orientation and focus, the flow of influence was restored to its reactionary norm. Artists, instead of being drawn into the orbit of the Movement, deserted the people's struggles for the alluring illusions of the Great White Way and Tinsel-Town. The same process that robbed the Movement of its leadership, robbed the people of their artists. In too many cases the leaders, artists and scholars did not simply desert the field of struggle but actually joined the ranks of those who profit from the people's misery.

The most significant literary work done by people from this period has been done in the essay. Here is where we wade through the swirling torrents of our experiences in search of coherent formulations and our ideas are exposed to critical evaluation.

The Free Southern Theater experience fits within this general context. What we have done is good, but the artistic and political potential of our work is far greater than anything we have actually been able to do. We have not created works which adequately illuminate those values or actions which the masses of people recognize as being



helpful and supportive to their struggle to improve the quality and character of our collective life. Although there are moments when we rise above it, our work has been dominated by private, ego-centered visions. Even as we address the problems of the Movement, we have seldom grasped the social, economic and historical essence of the problems we face.

At the same time we have not understood the compelling impact of economics on art. Qualitative improvement in the work requires study and practice; these take time and time costs money. The FST, again, in correspondence to the general trend of '60s survivors, has been supported primarily by grants and contributions from foundations and government sources. This is not viable.

The political, economic and social goals of those who provide the financial base and control the process must correspond to the aims and goals of the artists. In turn, these must correspond fundamentally to the needs of those who comprise the critical audience. If these corresponding relationships don't exist, then the efforts of the artists are ultimately nullified. These two problems, the philosophic and the economic, form the axis that identifies the shortcomings of art and cultural activity in the Civil Rights Movement. The challenge for the future is to meet and solve these problems.

The longer it takes for us to gain a firm grasp of these problems, the longer it will take us to meet the responsibility before us in this historic moment. The result will be an unconscionable delay in the coming of that day when the dreams of our grandparents and their grandparents before them shall come true. If we fail in this historic moment, then the legacy of suffering we pass to our children will be increased. Our failure would increase the ultimate cost of the struggle and will postpone the time when the social order shall be transformed. Future generations wait to see if we will shoulder our share of the burden. There is no question about whether we will ultimately win. The question is how much it will cost. □

John O'Neal is co-founder and director of the Free Southern Theater in New Orleans. O'Neal's one-person play, "Don't Start Me to Talking Or I'll Tell Everything I Know," is currently touring the country. For more information, contact: Free Southern Theater, 1307 Barracks St., New Orleans, LA 70116

Odinga, Odinga

Mark Suckle

*I went down to the Peach Tree Manor
To see Odinga, Odinga
The police said "Well, what's the matter?"
To see Odinga, Odinga.*

*Odinga, Odinga, Odinga, Odinga
Odinga, Odinga of Kenya
Odinga, Odinga, Odinga, Odinga
Odinga, Odinga of Kenya.*

*Uhuru-----Uhuru-----
Freedom now--Freedom now--*

*The folks in Mississippi
Will knock you on your rump
And if you holler FREEDOM
They'll throw you in the swamp.*





United Nations/Pendl

CHARLES COBB ATLANTA TO ZIMBABWE

What is the relationship between movements to change this country and liberation movements in the Third World? How did internationalism come to play a role among organizers in the United States in the 1960s? How important is the concept of a truly international "Freedom Movement?" Charles Cobb, whose experiences since 1961 have taken him from the front lines of organizing rural blacks in Mississippi to covering the liberation movements in southern Africa as a journalist, is in many ways uniquely qualified to shed light on these questions.

Like so many others of his generation, Cobb gravitated toward the Movement immediately after the Greensboro and Nashville sit-ins of 1960. Within the space of about 18 months, Cobb went from picketing Woolworth's in his Springfield, Massachusetts, hometown to working as a SNCC field secretary, one of only a handful from outside Mississippi. In 1966, he helped direct Julian Bond's successful campaign for the Georgia legislature. The next year, he began traveling. As a journalist, Cobb has reported for African World (published by the Student Organization for Black Unity), the National Black News Service, National Public Radio and Africa News.

As I came of age, the things that are dramatic in my memory are the 1954 Supreme Court decision, the events in Little Rock, the events in Montgomery, Alabama, and tangled in there are the independence of Ghana and the Mau Mau struggle in Kenya. I remember the *Pittsburgh Courier* used to run a little box on the front page which talked about the conflict in Kenya, the conflict in Congo, the Sharpsville demonstrations, Lumumba, Tshombe, Kasavubu, all of which were happening when I was in high school. These are things that were part of my consciousness, growing up.

A lot of us in 1960 and '61 who were in college were caught in the student sit-in movement, which was more or less a spontaneous movement, though not quite as spontaneous as some historians would suggest. I was living in Massachusetts and had been picketing the Woolworth's in support of Southern students in 1960. The students who were protesting in Greensboro and Nashville had the greatest dramatic impact; they were shown on television and so forth. People my age were strongly affected by that because it was, for our generation anyway, the first time in the South that we saw blacks taking the initiative themselves.

By the time the Freedom Rides

happened, I was at Howard, and literally sitting on the grass on the campus and reading in the student newspaper about the Howard students that had been involved in the Freedom Rides. Somebody gave me a leaflet about a sit-in demonstration in Maryland, which I picked up, read and went to, and I became involved in that way.

The name that repeatedly kept coming up was SNCC, simply because that was an organization that the students had formed. There was a discussion going on among a lot of students about whether sit-ins would really change anything, whether you should commit a real chunk of time to working in the South. What made up my mind was a very small blurb in the *New York Times* which talked about a voter registration project in Mississippi, run by Bob Moses in fact. The story was about the fact that Moses had brought some people down to register to vote and had gotten beaten up. And it struck me that more than sitting at lunch counters, this was probably something important, and I began to cast about for a way to get into that.

The first organization I approached was CORE, the Congress of Racial Equality, which sent me a letter back inviting me to a workshop they were holding in Houston, Texas. And I



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decided to go to that, combining going to that workshop with a tour of the South. I took a bus from Washington all the way through the Deep South — Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. When I got to Mississippi it was morning, and I knew that the SNCC people had an office somewhere in Mississippi. I didn't know where it was, so I called up the NAACP in Jackson, Mississippi, and asked where the SNCC office was. They told me, and I went there — this was August or July of '61 — and instead of going to Texas I wound up staying in Mis-

Black laborers at work on a tobacco plantation in southern Rhodesia, 1976. Below, children play outside their home in Capetown, South Africa, 1969.

issippi.

At that time SNCC was just in the process of expanding and had made the decision in fact to move into the Mississippi Delta, which is the biggest Black Belt area. In the northwest of the state, many of the counties, even though they were over 50 percent black, had no blacks registered to vote. In the case of Sunflower County, where Ruleville is, I think there were

three black people registered to vote in a county that was 66 percent black. That was very typical in the Delta.

What we were organizing people to do was to register to vote, mainly because that was the most legitimate thing. The law was pretty clear, at least the federal law: all people have the right to vote — Fourteenth, Fifteenth Amendment, all of that.

But we were also organizing in a deeper sense. Mississippi at that time, Alabama, the Arkansas Delta, the north of Louisiana, the northern Florida panhandle, the whole Black Belt South, southwest Georgia: if you were black and living in those areas, you were really living almost in a state of paralysis. I mean you were frozen, right in place. You worked for some white man on a plantation, you went to segregated schools that afforded very limited opportunities upon graduating, you certainly didn't ask any questions of the sheriff or the political officials, you certainly didn't challenge anything, you were just frozen there. As an organizer the idea — the *real* idea behind organizing — was to begin to get people in motion around something, just to break that paralysis. We thought, while we didn't have all the answers, that if we could show people that they could question the situation, that they could take some action about their situation, then they would find a correct action to take. Voter registration was the easiest lever to use in terms of doing that.

It was in '63 that we really started to become aware of Africa as I remember. What had happened was that Oginga Odinga, who was at that time the vice-president of Kenya, was touring the United States, and one of the places he visited was Atlanta, Georgia. A whole bunch of us went to see him, just because he was an African leader. There was no political assessment of Kenya, or any of that. He was a black guy who was a vice-president of a country, and we had just never seen that. He was staying at some posh hotel in downtown Atlanta, and he saw us. We had this talk, and shook his hand; it was a big thing. Afterwards we decided to go have coffee at this restaurant next door to the hotel, and we were all refused service. We were kinda high on meeting this black leader, and so naturally we refused to leave the restaurant, and we all got arrested. Oginga Odinga became a known name

in the organization. There were songs written about him. Because of this incident, discussion started.

Then in '64 Harry Belafonte, who was a supporter of SNCC and other organizations, arranged a trip to Africa for some SNCC people. It was a big thing, and built the discussion more and more in the organization. In the media by this time you're starting to get the whole business with Rhodesia and the Unilateral Declaration of Independence, and all this was filtering into the organization.

Our expanding consciousness of Africa and the discussions within the organization revolved around two key words: power and alternatives. All along we were asking ourselves whether what we were doing was really going to provide the answers for blacks. You work in a county, or you work in some rural town, and because you're working some blacks get killed or shot, something like that, and you inevitably ask yourself, "Is it really worth it? If they actually get this vote, what will it really mean for them? Is what we are about, making blacks Democrats or Republicans, is that really freedom, is that liberation?" And that question really became very intense in 1964, in the aftermath of the Democratic Party convention in Atlantic City, where clearly, legally and morally, the black delegation that we had organized as the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party should have been seated. By any standard, it should have been seated and wasn't. It didn't have anything to do with the merits of our case, it had to do with politics that were at play at that particular convention. As a consequence, coming out of that convention a few people were looking around for alternatives.

What we had learned essentially was that the things that affected blacks in Ruleville, Greenwood or Sharkey County, Mississippi, didn't just stop at the county line or the state line, that what we really had was a national structure, that the sheriff and the Ku Klux Klan and White Citizens Council were all tied into the Congress and the president and that even if we got everybody registered to vote in Sunflower County it really wasn't going to provide the complete answer for black people. We were beginning to see the relationship between economics and politics.

Then the question became — which began to lead us into Africa and more broadly into the Third World — where do we find alternative designs for organizing ourselves as a people? So Africa then begins to loom very large, partly because we were meeting poor people from ZANU and ZAPU and ANC, and African students. They would talk to us about their situation, and they knew what we were talking about and we knew what they were talking about, and there was something to share there. We began to talk to people more and more about independent institutions. The question of power — black power — became a discussion. The question of race intensified.

The work in the counties went on pretty much the same way it always had, but in addition our own broadening consciousness entered into those discussions. For Fannie Lou Hamer to go to Guinea the way she did didn't lead to some African institution developing in Ruleville, Mississippi, but perhaps it made Africa a little less alien to our friends and neighbors. Julius Lester and I went to Vietnam, people went to different parts of Africa, people went to Cuba, to Puerto Rico. We had taken a position on the

Vietnam War, and we were becoming interested in the African liberation movement.

As a field secretary for the organization, coming into contact with journalists and then seeing what they wrote, inevitably one says, "I can do a hell of a lot better than that." I traveled widely; I was in south Asia and Africa. It seemed to be important then to begin to figure out ways to communicate what I'd seen.

In 1969 I was teaching school here and decided to go to an African country long enough to really learn something about it. I chose Tanzania simply because it seemed to be the place where the liberation movements were concentrated and because I just happened to know more Tanzanians than anybody else. And one of the things I started to do was write.

The thing that I learned in the South, which I didn't know before going into it, was that what looks simple turns out to be complex. The same thing is true about rural Africa. And if you want to write about it, as I did when I got to Africa, or if you want to organize it, which is what I

National Union of Textile Workers strike, South Africa, 1980.

Courtesy Africa News





Anti-Apartheid demonstration in New York, 1977. Stephen Biko, leader in the resistance in South Africa, was killed in a South African prison.

LNS

did in Mississippi, then you have to learn to deal with these complexities.

You know the real problem with Western journalism, American journalism, is the assumptions that underlie it. American journalism is quite good in terms of facts and data. The problem comes with what the journalist or what the editor assumes about those facts. For instance, during the war in Zimbabwe, you know, you would get a report, say, "in X village 50 people were killed," and you could go to that village, and there would be 50 dead people, killed in the course of the war. Factually correct. Now, the question is, "Who killed them?" What do you assume about these dead people?

Now, a lot of journalists would say, "Well, they were killed by terrorists, because after all the government is civilized and it wouldn't kill 50 people." And there wouldn't be any real evidence beyond that. That's where your problem is. You know the experience in the South helps with avoiding some of those kinds of pitfalls.

It works in reverse. I mean, what happens here — especially in the black community — of course goes through the same media back to Africa. There really are no African correspondents here in America, and that's a problem.

I find two general distortions in terms of the way people in the U.S. have been taught to perceive events in Africa, not necessarily unrelated. First, in Zimbabwe the story is about what

happens to the white people. Recently, for instance, the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* had a long piece by John Burns, who is their correspondent in southern Africa, which essentially said that the critical question in Zimbabwe is what the white people think, feel and do. That is important in Zimbabwe, you know, but I don't think it's the essence of the story in Zimbabwe. The consequence of that, of course, is that you miss the real story — which is the African people.

The other problem, which is reflected in Angola and also Ethiopia, is the assumption — and this is particularly true at the policy level in the United States — that the African issue breaks down to a question of Soviet-American competition. So the Angolan issue becomes important only within the context of superpower rivalry. Which, again, is a distorted way to look at the Angolan situation, because Angola is very, very complicated.

There are also a number of lessons we can learn by looking at changes happening in Africa. Take Tanzania as an example. Unfortunately, the Tanzanian experiment has never really gotten off the ground from my point of view. But I think the ideas that they articulate are very, very

important. At the core of those ideas is the question of self-reliance. Not self-reliance in the Booker T. Washington sense of pull yourself up by your chains or whatever, but self-reliance in the sense that people use their own minds and their own energy to do for themselves, constantly fighting against becoming dependent on external powers.

Kenya, which the United States and other Western nations point to as an example of progressive development in an African state, will be worse off than Tanzania in the long run in the next decade. Things are really going to get bad. Kenya is beginning to have severe economic problems which may become politicized because there is such great disparity between rich and poor in Kenya. And I think that as that begins to happen, thoughtful people will take another look at Tanzania and see that it is pretty much on the right course.

There are many fights that have to be waged here to fight U.S. imperialism in Africa. In the broadest sense, of course, one says struggle in this country. There is also the question of policy. How do we minimize the reactionary nature of U.S. foreign policy? What do we do to prevent the United States from completely dumping on Africa or the Caribbean?

We must pay careful attention to what policymakers are doing or planning in terms of Africa and assist the African nations in fighting against policies that are seen as harmful or fighting for things that are seen as helpful. I immediately say support for the liberation movement in southern Africa, South Africa in particular.

Then there is the fact that Africa needs an awful lot of things. I'd like to see people with skills and training in this country work for short- or long-term periods in Africa. I'm talking about people who finish their internship or residency maybe practicing medicine for a year or so in African countries. Engineers. Scientists. Teachers. All of that is possible. The continent is open to that. Nobody has ever really organized it from my viewpoint. But I still think it's a good idea. It's something people should think about, because that counts for a lot. □

Charles Cobb was interviewed by Julius Scott, a graduate student at Duke University.



LAUGHLIN MC DONALD VOTING RIGHTS ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK

Editor's note: The century-long denial of voting rights in Edgefield, South Carolina, chronicled here by Laughlin McDonald, exemplifies the importance of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the battle now shaping up in Congress over its extension.

In 1880, B.R. "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman was elected chairman of the Democratic Party of his native Edgefield County, South Carolina. In the years that followed, as a local politician, governor and United States senator, Tillman earned the reputation of being a savage racist and the single person most responsible for the total exclusion of blacks from state elective politics after Reconstruction. Nearly 100 years later, on a cool spring evening, Thomas C. McCain, a black man, was elected to Tillman's line of succession as the newest chairman of the county Democratic Party.

McCain's election is part of the dramatic racial change that has swept the South since the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. But racial change in Edgefield, a rural county lying next to the Savannah River 15 miles north of Aiken, has often been more cosmetic than substantive. In spite of the fact that blacks hold local party positions, *no black in a century has ever been elected to the county government, nor has a black been elected to any countywide office running against a white candidate.* Ruling whites in Edgefield aim to keep it that way.

Voting rights have always been seen as key to racial equality — political, social and economic. George Tillman, Ben's older brother, stated the proposition succinctly in 1868: "Once you grant a Negro political privileges

you instantly advance his social status." If given the right to vote, said Tillman, blacks would vie with whites for the honors of state and support only those who treated "the nigger race as social and political equals."

George Tillman's worst fears were to be realized during Reconstruction. Edgefield's majority black population voted in their own town and county governments. By the mid-1870s, the county senator, county representatives, county commissioner, the coroner, sheriff, probate judge, school commissioner and clerk of court were all blacks. Blacks served on the school board, as magistrates, solicitors, wardens, and at every level of city and county government. Blacks in Edgefield were never better represented, before or since, nor had more opportunities for advancement, than during the period of Reconstruction government.

Whites never acquiesced to black rule. After general enfranchisement in 1867, local Democratic and agricultural societies sprang up; among other goals, they used social and economic coercion to deter blacks and white Republicans from voting. The Democrats failed in these early attempts to regain dominance, and turned increasingly to fraud and violence as a means of restoring political control. Rifle and sabre clubs were formed in virtually every township, and operated literally as a terrorist wing of the Democratic Party.

Ben Tillman was a charter member of one such club, the Sweetwater Sabre Club, organized in 1873. He became captain three years later, and was in command when two of his men executed Simon Coker, a black state senator from nearby Barnwell. According to Tillman's biog-

rapher, Coker had been seized for making an "incendiary speech." As the bound senator kneeled in prayer, he was shot in the head by one of the Sweetwater clubmen, while another put a second bullet in the prostrate corpse to make certain he was not "playing possum."

Violence reached an apogee in Edgefield County in July, 1876, at the notorious massacre in the town of Hamburg. Ben Tillman, one of the participants, conceded that it "had been the settled purpose of the leading white men of Edgefield to provoke a riot and teach the Negroes a lesson — and if one did not offer, we were to make one." Rampaging whites attacked the town and killed a number of blacks. When none were tried or convicted for the murders, it was taken as a sign that Republican control had been broken, and that Reconstruction was coming to an end.

The results of the next election in 1876 were determined by the "Edgefield Plan" for redemption, authored by George Tillman and General Martin Witherspoon Gary, the fierce, unreconstructed "Bald Eagle of the Confederacy." The watch word adopted for the campaign was "Fight the Devil with Fire." Every Democrat, the standing rules provided, "must feel honor-bound to control the vote of at least one Negro, by intimidation, purchase, keeping him away or as each individual may determine, how he may best accomplish it." As for violence, never merely threaten a man: "If he deserves to be threatened, the necessities of the times require that he should die." Ben Tillman wrote later that "Gary and George Tillman had to my personal knowledge agreed on the policy of terrorizing the Negroes at the first opportunity."



Black candidate campaigning for election in the South during the Reconstruction era.

On election day, Gary and several hundred armed men seized the two polling places in Edgefield – the Masonic Hall and the Courthouse – and refused to allow blacks in to vote. Open race warfare, together with Gary's doctrine of voting "early and often," was enough to ensure a Democratic majority. The following year, the Edgefield Plan was essentially condoned by the Compromise of 1877, ending Reconstruction and withdrawing federal troops from the South. Control of Edgefield and South Carolina as a whole was left to men like Ben Tillman, who had vowed never again to see whites subjected to the humiliation of black rule.

The redeemers set about at once to institutionalize white supremacy. On the political front, the legislature passed in 1878 a law eliminating precincts in strong Republican areas and requiring voters to travel great distances to cast a ballot. Then in 1882, a complicated balloting procedure, amounting to a literacy test, was introduced; and another law required eligible voters to be registered by June, 1882. Those who failed to register were barred from registration thereafter, and the only additional registration was for those who became eligible after June, 1882. Local officials had full discretion in implementing the registration requirements, and aggrieved persons had to appeal within five days and institute suit within 15 days. The laws were an invitation to fraud, and were used for the sole purpose of disfranchising

blacks.

Tillman was elected governor in 1890 on a platform of Negrophobia and agrarian discontent. Although there were still a few blacks in the legislature, in his inaugural speech Tillman could safely say, "Whites have effective control of the state government," and, he declared, "we intend at any and all hazards to retain it." In his second term as governor, the redeemed state legislature abolished elected local governments entirely to put it beyond all possibility that blacks, even in places where they were an overwhelming majority, could have any say about who their representatives would be. County and township commissioners were henceforth to be appointed by the governor, upon the recommendation of the local senator and representatives. All powers to tax, borrow money, appoint local boards or exercise eminent domain were reserved for the state legislature.

Ruling whites, however, still felt the need for more systematic means to take the actual ballot out of the hands of blacks, and to replace the despised Reconstruction Constitution of 1868, known as the "Radical Rag." Tillman took the lead in calling for a constitutional convention to accomplish both these purposes.

The convention was held in 1895. Tillman, by then a United States senator, was made chairman of the

Committee on the Franchise. Under his leadership, the basic suffrage qualifications enacted were residence in the state for two years, in the county for one, and in the election district for six months; payment of a one-dollar poll tax six months before the day of the election; and registration. To register, the voter had to be able to read and write any section of the Constitution or prove that he owned or paid taxes on property in the state worth at least \$300. For those who could not meet the literacy test by reading, there was an understanding test where the Constitution was read by a registration officer – who could be expected to be sympathetic to white and hostile to black illiterates. As D.D. Wallace, a contemporary historian, observed the year following the convention, "Such is South Carolina's suffrage law, under which it is hoped to put Negro control of the State beyond possibility and still preserve the suffrage for the illiterate whites of the present generation." So great was the fear of black participation in politics, however, that the year after the convention the all-white Democratic primary was adopted to exclude even those few blacks who were registered from voting in the only elections in the state which had any meaning.

Black disfranchisement, from the white point of view, was an incredible success story. In Edgefield, by 1900, not a single black remained on the county voter rolls, and none was to appear for nearly 50 years.

After years of protest, legal skirmishes and organized resistance within South Carolina's black community, the Edgefield Plan received its first official blow in 1947, when federal judge Waties Waring of Charleston, in an opinion passionately denounced by whites throughout the state, ruled that the segregated Democratic primary was unconstitutional. Frank Jenkins, a bus driver for the Edgefield public schools, and several other local blacks decided it was time to test the decision upholding their right to register and vote. They went to the courthouse, but nobody could tell them who or where the voter registrar was. They came again and this time were dealt with more directly. "The man said," recalls Mr. Jenkins wryly, "'If you don't leave, I'll kick your ass out of here.'" The group came back a

third time — with a lawyer from Charleston — and were allowed to register.

In the face of such open hostility by courthouse officials and continued use of the discriminatory literacy test, black registration remained depressed in Edgefield until the enactment of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Immediately prior to the act, only 650 blacks were registered in the entire county — 17 percent of the eligible voter population. Nearly 100 percent of eligible whites, by contrast, were certified voters.

As one of the fruits of years of struggle by the Civil Rights Movement, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 formalized a major breakthrough in the legal rights of blacks in places such as Edgefield. Laws prohibiting discrimination in voting had been enacted by Congress before — in 1957, 1960 and 1964. These laws, however, depended mainly upon litigation for enforcement, which placed the advantages of time and inertia on the side of recalcitrant local officials. Moreover, *there was nothing to keep a jurisdiction from changing its laws and enacting new discriminatory election procedures, even after the old ones had been struck down by the courts as unconstitutional.*

To meet these problems, Congress adopted in 1965 an entirely new approach to voter legislation. It suspended literacy and similar “tests or devices” which had been used to exclude blacks from registering, and pursuant to Section Five of the law, placed supervision of new voting procedures in the hands of federal officials. Jurisdictions covered by Section Five — those with low registration or voter turn-out, and with a “test or device” in effect — were required to clear all changes in election laws with the U.S. attorney general or the federal courts in the District of Columbia before implementing the changes to make certain they did not affect a person’s right to vote on account of race or color. The entire states of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Virginia and 40 counties in North Carolina were among the jurisdictions required to pre-clear their election law changes.

Southern resistance to the act was predictable. One of those who took the lead in denouncing it was Senator Strom Thurmond, born in Edgefield in 1902 and its former county attor-

ney. The act trampled upon the rights of the sovereign states, he said, and made the South the whipping boy for the nation. Following Thurmond’s lead, the state of South Carolina filed a lawsuit to strike down the law, but the Supreme Court in 1966 found the Voting Rights Act to be wholly constitutional. As Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote, “Hopefully, millions of non-white Americans will now be able to participate for the first time on an equal basis in the government under which they live.”

The suspension of literary tests had a dramatic impact, and some Southern jurisdictions now register blacks at approximately the same rates as whites. But unfortunately, black registration has not meant equality of political participation. For one thing, many jurisdictions have ignored Section Five and made uncleared voting changes which blunted increased minority voter registration.

Edgefield was one of those places.

In 1966, when it seemed likely that the county, because of its relatively small population, would lose a resident senator following reapportionment of the state legislature, and just as newly registered blacks were beginning to gain enough political clout to pressure their legislative delegation and the governor to appoint a black to county office, the method of selecting Edgefield’s government was changed to provide for home rule. A three-member council was established with full power to tax, make appointments and regulate county affairs. Although the council could have been elected from districts — which in the absence of a racial gerrymander would have created at least one black district — the decision was made to elect all council members at-large. Since whites in Edgefield in 1966 were a majority

“The First Vote” for blacks in the South, a drawing from Harper’s magazine, circa 1867.



of registered voters, and a majority of persons eligible to be registered, the at-large plan ensured that whites could continue to control each local political office. And that is exactly what has happened.

Although the Voting Rights Act clearly required a federal review of this new voting procedure, state and local officials failed to submit the change. Two subsequent amendments to the 1966 law, one increasing the size of the council to five and establishing new residential districts for council members, and another enlarging the council's power to make appointments, were submitted for pre-clearance. But the underlying

change from appointed to elected at-large government has never been given the required federal approval, even after 15 years. By similarly manipulating voting procedures, whites in dozens of other Southern communities like Edgefield have blocked the election of blacks despite vastly increased black registration.

In 1974, Tom McCain, then an assistant professor of mathematics at Paine College in Augusta, became the first black since Reconstruction to run for Edgefield county government.

A poster designed and widely distributed by the Voter Education Project in the 1970s.

Hands that pick cotton... now can pick our public officials



VOTER EDUCATION PROJECT, INC.
52 FAIRLIE ST. NW
ATLANTA, GA. 30303
(404) 522-7490

McCain was well respected in the black community and was an advocate of racial justice. He founded Community Action for Full Citizenship of Edgefield County in the early 1970s, and began systematically to challenge local racial discrimination. He led the bitterly resisted fight to desegregate the schools, organized the county's first black voter registration drive and successfully sued the Edgefield jury commissioners for excluding blacks from jury service — no blacks were allowed to serve on the grand jury and only a token number on trial juries.

As a result of his civil-rights activities, McCain has drawn the fire of local whites. Members of the school board have sued him twice. In the first case, they got an injunction against his further organizing, but when McCain was unable to get even a trial on the merits of the injunction, a federal judge, in an unprecedented move, stepped in and dissolved it. The second suit is pending, one in which the board seeks \$240,000 in damages, claiming that McCain libeled them in a pamphlet which criticized the operation of public schools as discriminatory. Other local white officials display similar hostility toward McCain. Mary Ellen Painter, the head of the voter registration board, says he only wants "to cause trouble." County Attorney Charles Coleman was quoted recently in a Georgia newspaper that if McCain "were a white man, I think he'd be Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan."

But Tom McCain is no racist and hardly a radical. His goal, he says, is merely for blacks to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. Level-headed and hard-working — he is now finishing work on a Ph.D. in education administration at Ohio State University — McCain moves easily and unself-consciously in the black community of Edgefield, urging people to register and become active in politics.

McCain's decision to run for office was completely logical. "We've got so many problems in Edgefield," he says, "we can't begin to make progress unless we get some responsive people in decision-making positions. The whites know they can just about get along without us politically. That means we get only what they want to give us."

County Attorney Coleman, however, scoffs at the notion that whites can't, or don't, adequately represent blacks. In fact he claims, "The blacks

get as much or *more* service than the whites” from the present council. McCain disagrees, and notes that the black complaint is in any case more basic than provision of services. “There’s no question that we don’t get services like we should,” McCain says. “We never have. But even if we did, that would still miss the point. There was more to school desegregation than reading and writing, and there’s more to biracial politics than paved roads. There’s an inherent value in office-holding that goes far beyond picking up the garbage. A race of people who are excluded from public office will always be second class. I know it, and the people who keep Edgefield’s government all white know it.”

McCain lost the 1974 race for county council, and a second race two years later, because whites don’t vote for blacks in Edgefield. A visual examination of election returns reveals the severe racial polarization in local voting. In predominantly white districts, where voting patterns are clearest, black candidates always get virtually the same number of votes — few, or none at all. Bloc voting has been confirmed by Dr. John Suich, a scientist in Aiken, who has analyzed elections in Edgefield in which blacks have been candidates. The statistical correlation between the race of voter and candidate was “extraordinarily high,” in the range of 0.90 (on a scale of -1.00 to +1.00) for each election. “The correlations are not just statistically significant,” says Suich, “they are overwhelming.”

The election returns also show that if Edgefield were divided into five districts along its present residential district lines, two of the districts would have a majority of black registered voters. Candidates like McCain would stand a realistic chance of winning office in these districts, an opportunity currently denied them by the at-large system. Indeed, McCain won his position as chairman of the Democratic Party because the delegates to the county convention which chose him are elected from individual districts or precincts. Enough of the delegates were black to give him the margin of victory.

In 1974, McCain and two other blacks decided to do something about Edgefield’s elections and filed a federal lawsuit charging that at-large voting unconstitutionally diluted their voting



Archie E. Allen

strength. While the lawsuit was pending, the county council adopted an ordinance in 1976 implementing statewide home rule, and providing for elections at-large. The ordinance was a change in voting but was not pre-cleared under Section Five of the Voting Rights Act. As a result, the elections of 1976 and 1978 were held in violation of the act. A belated submission was made and in February, 1979, the attorney general objected to the use of at-large elections, noting that if a new election system was adopted “that more accurately reflects minority voting strength, such as single-member districts,” the objection would be reconsidered. A single-member plan was in fact prepared and approved by the council, but was never submitted under Section Five because the council later took the position that the attorney general’s objection was not binding.

When it appeared that the administrative proceedings under Section Five had broken down in Edgefield, and that no new method of elections was being established to meet the attorney general’s objection, the trial judge entered an order last April in favor of McCain and the other plaintiffs. The court reached “the inevitable conclusion” that Edgefield’s at-large system was unconstitutional and “must be changed.” Some of the court’s findings were:

- “Until 1970, no black had ever served as a precinct election

John Lewis (then director of VEP) and Julian Bond on registration drive in S.C.

official, and since that year the number of blacks appointed to serve has been negligible.”

- “Blacks were historically excluded from jury service in Edgefield County.”
- “Blacks have been excluded from employment. . . . It was only when trial was about to begin that the county suddenly began hiring blacks in any numbers. . . . In addition, blacks are heavily concentrated at the lower wage levels.”
- “Blacks have been excluded by the County Council in appointments to county boards and commissions.”
- “There is bloc voting by the whites on a scale that this court has never before observed. . . . Whites absolutely refuse to vote for a black.”

Four days after the court’s opinion, the U.S. Supreme Court effectively overruled it by handing down *City of Mobile v. Bolden*, a decision which shocked even those civil-rights activists familiar with the conservative rulings of the Burger court. The case originated when a group of Mobile black plaintiffs brought a lawsuit in 1975 charging that the city’s at-large elections diluted their voting strength in violation of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and the

Voting Rights Act. The plaintiffs based their legal claim primarily upon a 1973 court of appeals decision, *Zimmer v. McKeithen*, which held that at-large voting can be shown to be unconstitutional through an accumulation of circumstantial evidence — such as by showing a history of racial discrimination in the city, a disproportionately low number of minorities elected to office, lack of responsiveness by elected officials to the needs of the black community, a disparate economic base, candidate slating, etc. — the same kinds of things relied upon by the judge in the Edgefield voting case.

According to the Supreme Court's *Mobile* decision, such factors do not in themselves establish an unconstitutional denial of voting rights. The court, in a split ruling, said that plaintiffs in vote dilution cases must prove *intentional* discrimination; they acknowledged that the Constitution protects the right to register and vote without hindrance, but held that it does not protect the right to have the vote count! That right would only be violated if the voting system were consciously conceived and operated as a *purposeful* device to further racial discrimination.

The *Mobile* decision places an all but impossible burden upon those challenging racially discriminatory election procedures. Invidious intent can no longer be shown by past deeds, a history of discrimination and its effects; only those challenges will win, presumably, when elected officials are caught making overtly racial defenses of voting procedures. None but the naive — or, apparently, Supreme Court justices — can expect that to happen very often. Public officials, especially those who are sued and represented by counsel, rarely admit to racism. *Mobile* means that blacks in jurisdictions which use at-large voting — including most Southern cities, counties and school boards — will be denied any remedy for exclusion from office.

Following the Supreme Court's decision, the district judge in the Edgefield case withdrew his earlier opinion and reopened the case to give the plaintiffs a chance to prove that local elections were adopted, or are being maintained, intentionally to exclude blacks. Tom McCain then amended his complaint asking the court to order Edgefield officials

to comply with Section Five's pre-clearance requirements, both in adopting at-large voting in 1966 and in implementing statewide home rule in 1976. Given the normal practice of the courts to avoid deciding constitutional questions whenever possible, McCain's complaint may be judged solely on Edgefield's violation of the procedural requirements of Section Five rather than on the constitutional question of its purposeful intent to dilute black voting strength.

There is one major catch. Beginning August 6, 1982, South Carolina and most the South will be in a position to escape being covered by Section Five. The Voting Rights Act's requirement that jurisdictions clear proposed changes with the federal government is limited to 17 years from the time they used a "test or device" to restrict voters' rights — namely from 1965, when such practices became illegal. If the Act's provisions are not extended by 1982, South Carolina can apply to be released from federal monitoring and can then ratify retroactively, or re-enact in new form, such uncleared changes in voting procedures as those adopted in Edgefield in 1966 and 1976.

The only handle for challenging discriminatory changes would then be lawsuits based on constitutional issues — the handle that existed prior to 1965. Except now the Supreme Court's *Mobile* decision, with its artificial standard of proof of purpose, may make it impossible for minorities to win constitutional lawsuits where local officials successfully cover their racial tracks. It is not an exaggeration to say that minorities stand perilously close today to where they were in 1877, when the nation, grown weary of the race issue, agreed to let local officials deal with voting rights as they saw fit.

Organizing inside the South and by national groups is now underway to get Congress to extend the length of time states like South Carolina must follow Section Five. Saying "It is the duty of this generation of black people to take not one step backward," a coalition of groups in South Carolina recently announced plans to push for the act's extension.

National civil-rights groups, including dozens coordinated by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, also hope to amend the act to provide the legal foundation to overcome the

Supreme Court's *Mobile* decision. For example, Section Two, which some of the Supreme Court justices now interpret as only prohibiting purposeful discrimination, might be amended to read: "No voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure shall be imposed or applied by any state or political subdivision which has the result of denying or abridging the right of any citizen of the United States on account of race or color. . . ."

These organizing and lobbying efforts are expected to meet with stiff resistance, particularly from Senator Strom Thurmond, now chairman of the powerful Senate Judiciary Committee. Thurmond claims that the act "singles out the South" for special treatment, and he wants to abolish it or make its extension apply "nationwide." Of course, the Voting Rights Act already *is* nationwide: it was amended in 1970 and 1975 to make the ban on literacy tests permanent and nationwide, and to expand the number of jurisdictions covered by Section Five to include those with significant language minorities; it now applies in 24 states or parts of states, from Maine to Florida, from the East Coast to the West. But Thurmond apparently hopes that by threatening to expand the act to require all states and all jurisdictions to pre-clear all changes in voting procedures, he will destroy the act's efficacy, or he will capture enough support to kill it altogether. If the Thurmond strategy prevails, it will push the movement for voting rights back more than a century.

Thurmond even insists that voting rights don't need protecting. "There's no discrimination of any kind that exists throughout South Carolina," he said recently. That should come as a surprise to Tom McCain and other blacks in Thurmond's hometown of Edgefield. □

Laughlin McDonald was born and grew up in Winnsboro, South Carolina, not far from Edgefield. Director of the Southern Regional Office of the ACLU, he has represented blacks in Edgefield County in numerous civil-rights lawsuits.



JUDY HAND
AND SCOTT DOUGLAS
**ENOUGH IS
ENOUGH**
VOTING RIGHTS DENIED

Charles Moore/Black Star

While many of us weighed the merits (or lack of them) of the various candidates in the November, 1980, elections, black voters in Pickens County, Alabama, faced a different dilemma than whom to vote for. For them it was a choice of whether to vote at all. It wasn't a question of apathy — it was a problem of safety and security.

A pattern of outright resistance to the demands of black voters has emerged in this small southwest Alabama county. Voting Rights Act or not, black citizens in Pickens County find themselves subjected to threats, harassment and jail sentences if they challenge the all-white power structure. The intimidation and prosecution seems especially directed against those who register blacks to vote or who show others how to use the absentee ballot to increase black voting strength.

In the last two years, two black women and one black man have been convicted of charges ranging from voting fraud to disturbing the peace (at a polling place). Their stories follow a general description of the political atmosphere in the county by Geraldine Sawyer.

GERALDINE SAWYER

Geraldine Sawyer grew up in Pickens County. After graduating from high school there in 1967, she went to Flint, Michigan, where she became involved in community organizing. She came back in 1976 to help her mother care for an aging aunt and is now mayor of the small unincorporated residential community of McMullen just outside Aliceville.

The only way we can survive is by voting. I started trying to be a deputy registrar because I knew blacks and some whites, when you say courthouse, they freeze up, they been scared off. If I were a deputy registrar, I could meet you on the street and say, here's your card, fill out this application, and when the time comes to vote, you can vote. Rather than trying to get up gas money, picking up all these people and taking them there. But they said, "We don't need any deputy registrars. We can't pay." I said, "I don't want pay. I'm doing it for free. I got six other people that's going to do it for free. The Pickens County Commission doesn't have to pay us one cent." But we couldn't get it approved, we never got it.

So we went door-to-door, getting people to the courthouse and getting them registered to vote. I walked all summer, each project, every area. You know, that's time-consuming when you're talking to people that don't understand. We got over 800 people registered this year, working out of small areas — Pickensville, Gordo, Reform. These are some of the areas that have been whitewashed all the time, that whatever "Mr. White-man" says goes. You don't run, you

don't put black people to run for city council or county commission or any kind of board.

Not only that, but the police are a problem. We've had a number of deaths with no explanation. Last year, a guy was coming down the highway from Carrollton, the police were chasing him, and he goes off on the left side of the street rather than going off on the right. Then the car is all bent up, and then you see gunshot holes all through the car. Now, that's never been explained. They bring them to a funeral home and pronounce them dead, and they don't even have a doctor.

It's bad for blacks not to be able to speak out, or say I'm filing a suit. We got a black guy here now that filed a lawsuit against one of the stores in downtown Aliceville. Then he and another black guy got into it at the pool hall. The other guy decided he'd drop the charges, but the state decided to go on and prosecute. That's the way they get you, see. They sent a guy up for 25 years just last week, said he was a peeping tom. And just going on hearsay.

The first year I came back from Michigan, I applied to one of the banks, but my face was black. I was trained as a teller, but I didn't get the job. Even at the police station, I was trained in that job, too. All you do is type the card, the color of your hair, your height, how much you weigh and what kind of incident you were involved in, and then you file it. I went for that job. But my face was too black. And I was qualified for it.

It's not what you know, it's who you know here. If you know somebody's daughter's grandfather, and he can talk to Mr. Whitey and say, "This person, they're all right. They eat



Charles Moore/Black Star

cheese, and no matter what you do, they don't open their mouth," then you're hired because you're good black folks. That's the way it is. And we sit and talk about it. We just need a great big change.

We had a march in November of last year. You know what the white man told Willie Davis? He said, "You know, that was ridiculous you got up and stood on the steps and said what you said. You have a brother that's in a little trouble. If you hadn't said what you said, things would be better

Voter registration form used in Mississippi.

for him."

I sat in on Mrs. Bozeman's trial, and it was the worst chopped-up, botched-up trial I ever saw in all my days. They took the older people that we were going around to, explaining what the absentee ballot was about. What they did, they took these old, old people that didn't really understand, they took them in a private room with no tape recorder, and had

them say, yes, they give us this, they signed this for us. You're in there, you're being badgered, you're liable to say anything to make them leave you alone. And then they get the people on the stand. "Didn't you say such-and-such on such-and-such a day in my office?" "Well, yes, I said that."

MAGGIE BOZEMAN

Maggie Bozeman is a lifelong resident of Pickens County. She taught in the public school system there for 27 years until the summer of 1979, when she was fired after being convicted of voting fraud by an all-white jury.

Mrs. Wilder is the chairperson for the Voters League here in Pickens County, and I am the coordinator. We were involved in voter registration. We had a big campaign going in 1978. The goal was getting people registered and encouraging them to get out to vote.

The second big thing was conducting workshops trying to teach people the importance of getting to the polls, and their rights after they got there. On September 13, 1978, the Attorney General sent out an opinion on the voting procedure for helping the illiterate. We used this opinion in the workshops, stressing to people not to be ashamed, but to be aware that there were people available to assist those who did not understand the ballot. The third thing was, we encouraged them to get absentee ballots, if they were out of town or if they were sick.

In 1978, we had a young woman running for the Pickens County Board of Education by the name of Minnie Hill. She qualified against a Republican, an established banker in town.

The day before the election, that's when I was picked up at school. Poor fool, I was just out there with my kids, as usual, having fun on the playground. I looked to the left of me and I saw the police, five cars. The kids and I said, "Somebody must have stolen something, what has happened?"

I got into the classroom with no fear, didn't know anything. I had gotten in there, hot and all that, and over the PA the principal said, "Mrs.



Courtesy Voter Education Project

Bozeman, will you come to the office please?" I didn't know what was going on. The sheriff was in the office. He said, "You're under arrest." I said, "For what?" He said, "You will have to go with me to Carrollton."

There were three in the office just like I was a criminal or something. Three people in the office to pick me up. I said, "Well, I'll get my bag. I don't have to go with you. I'll go on my own."

The system tricked and convicted us. They said we sent applications for absentee ballots to people who were not aware. The application specifically spells out: where do you want your ballot mailed? You see, if my mother can't read and write, and I am the daughter, she wouldn't know the ballot when it got to her house, so I would have it come to my box. You have a right to have that ballot go to anybody's house you want it sent to. We taught in the workshops that the person voting must understand the ballot, what they are voting on, and mark their own ballot.

I never did get notice for the trial. One of the witnesses called me the night before around 11 o'clock. The day after I was convicted, the Pickens

White terror in the nineteenth century ended voting rights for most blacks.

County Board of Education met in a special session at seven o'clock. The superintendent called me and told me not to report to class anymore. I said, "With this short notice, you mean to tell me I'm not supposed to go back to school?"

"Yes, ma'am! I am sending you a registered letter in the morning," he said. "You just stay there until you get the letter, and you will not report back to school until further notice." I haven't worked since then. It's rough.

I got four years, and Mrs. Wilder got five. The woman that ran for the Board of Education was indicted with the same charges, but they dropped hers at the end of my trial. She lost that race. If she had won, they would have prosecuted her sure as the world.

Here in the July, 1980, election, we had the opinion saying a voter could ask a person of their choosing to go in the voting booth and help them. If they would select you, say, "Would you please come here and assist me," under the law, you have the right to do that. But they came up with an old law where it said the only

way you could assist a person is if the inspector came and got you. It was mass confusion down there at the polls. There were many persons who never could vote on July 8.

We challenged that right away, and we were thrown out of the courthouse that day. Well, I wouldn't stay thrown out. The policeman came in and said, "If you don't get out, we are going to throw you out." So we had to call the Justice Department. Some changes were made by the federal observers being here. Before the federal observers, you walked into the polling places here in Pickens County, and it was like walking into a church. Everybody saw you vote, everybody was looking at you to see what you were going to do. Now they have it blocked off, curtains are there where you go on the inside.

This year, October of 1980, I went up to pick up some applications for absentee ballots, and the sheriff told me, "You're getting some more of them. Maggie Bozeman will get them to vote if she has to vote them in herself. We're going to get you this time." An elected official said that.

This election — the presidential election, November 4 — we ran into all kinds of problems. I was told to get out at that election because I was assisting a person. And in Reform, Willie Davis was arrested because he was assisting a person.

You see, Davis is from Reform, Alabama, where the voting strength is four-to-one white. So we had some workshops again, and we stressed that in that area we need some black voting strength because we don't have a voice to cry with. We got a small grant from the NAACP, and they formed a committee to sponsor a voter registration drive this past summer. And just prior to the November election, Willie Davis got 105 people registered from one Monday to the next Monday. Look what happened to him. Got arrested in the polling place, and one of the officials said, "All these niggers wouldn't be here if it wasn't for that Willie Davis." I mean, the guy who got the folks registered, they got him. It's obvious.

It's a struggle here, just a struggle. Sometimes I just wonder how we're going to survive, if it's not any better yet.

There was one white person on the day of my conviction that said, "It's a living shame." One.



courtesy SCLC

WILLIE DAVIS

Willie Davis grew up in Reform, Alabama, and graduated in 1978 from Alabama State University with a degree in education. He has been unable to find work in Pickens County, where there is a great need for good teachers. He is president of Pickens County SCLC.

Around four o'clock on Tuesday — election day — I returned to Reform and met two young ladies and gave them a sample ballot. They knew what candidates they wanted to vote for, but didn't understand the amendments. The police came up and told me I had already voted and could not remain in the polls. I told the police I was there to help. They told me to stand back 30 feet. I kept asking them questions, then they just carried me, one on the left and one on the right, out of the polls. One hollered at me and I hollered back. The other one handcuffed me.

They took me to Carrollton, and the sheriff told the deputy to get on the phone and call Pep Johnson [the district attorney]. They carried me back in another little room. I asked how long they were going to keep me, and what they were charging me with. They said Pep Johnson had to make the decision on whether to lock me up and what charges to place. Pep Johnson called then, and they charged me

Albany, Ga., voter registration clinic, 1962.

with disorderly conduct.

I've had a lot of messages since then from the police through people who run with me, my family and friends, saying they shouldn't run with me. And they tell people to stay away from Maggie Bozeman and Julia Wilder. So I make it my business to be seen with them.

JULIA WILDER

Julia Wilder grew up in Olney, Alabama, eight miles from Aliceville. She became active during the Civil Rights Movement in 1968, and has been the chairperson of the Voters League of Pickens County for many years. Along with Maggie Bozeman, she was convicted of voting fraud during the summer of 1979.

'Sixty-eight was my waking-up period. We've got a Piggly-Wiggly store here. The owner had five cashiers and no black cashiers. So we had a demand for some black cashiers. We had this march the last part of '68. He had the police around, and 13 of us went to jail. I was in that bunch. I was the

oldest person there.

We stayed in jail from Saturday night until Monday afternoon. But they got tired of us, I'm honest about it, because we were very noisy. We sang all night and slept all day.

So after then, he didn't hire anybody right off, but we were boycotting the place, and he had to throw away so much stuff until he did hire some blacks.

In '69, we got 200 folks registered within three months time, right here in Aliceville, and more in Ethelsville, and also Carrollton and Gordo. We did well with it. Been doing pretty well since, but that's the most success I've had.

I didn't know anything about absentees and such things other than what the probate judge told me about, the circuit clerk and the sheriff of Pickens County. I said it on the witness stand. I told them I remember that they didn't challenge a single ballot when they were running it. That might be how come I got five years, I don't know. I told them I was going to remember them when it came election time, and the same type of influence that I used to help to get them in there, I'm going to use to get them out. I told them there that I wasn't going to quit, because I felt like what I was doing was right, and I was going to keep doing it. I didn't do anything but ask people if they wanted to vote.

No matter how rough it gets, I'm going to be here, because I don't have anyplace else to go. They used to put up signs saying, "Enough is enough," and I go along with that, because enough is enough. But I went a little further and said, "Too much stinks." And I'm still saying it.

On December 10, 1980, Willie Davis was convicted in Pickens County Courthouse of disturbing the peace. He was sentenced to 30 days in jail or a \$500 fine. Davis' case is being appealed to a circuit court jury trial. The convictions of Maggie Bozeman and Julia Wilder have now been appealed on the grounds of insufficient evidence to the Alabama Court of Appeals in Montgomery. □

Judy Hand is the projects coordinator for the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic Justice. Scott Douglas is a writer in Birmingham, Alabama.

JESSE TAYLOR

BLOODY SUMMER

Tom Key had been drinking again, but that wasn't strange. It was Saturday morning, and he'd caught a ride with one of his drinking buddies. Margaret Key figured that both men would be good and tight by the time they got back.

She wasn't worried about her husband getting in any trouble. The 39-year-old black man would drink his liquor, but he wasn't going to curse anybody or get into a fight. He'd just sit up in a juke joint and play cards or tell stories, and if trouble started he'd get on up and come on back home. Margaret was just angry that her husband was spending money drinking when he was too sick to get a job and too trifling to get on disability.

Margaret Key was sitting on her mother's front porch when Russell Reid drove up with her husband and parked in the grass across the road. The wooden porch was filled up with her mother, her two nephews and her youngest son. The boys straddled the railing and stretched out on the old chairs, shouting and trading jokes. None of them paid much attention as Tom and Russell shared the last of a half-pint and talked quietly in the car.

Tom Key and Russell Reid weren't sitting there long before a South Carolina Highway Patrol car pulled up behind them. In it was Gordon Paul, a white highway patrolman in his early twenties, heavily built and in excellent shape. The patrolman got out of his car, adjusted his belt and walked up to Russell Reid. "Uh-oh," said one of the boys, grinning. "Russell going to jail now!" Everybody was paying attention.

The patrolman talked to Russell Reid for a moment, then walked around to the passenger side to talk to Tom Key. After a while, Tom Key

opened the car door and the patrolman walked him back to the patrol car. Paul put Key in the back seat of the car, then walked back up to where Russell Reid was still sitting. The patrolman did not handcuff Tom Key. And he did not shut the back door.

Before the patrolman could reach Russell Reid, Tom Key had jumped out of the patrol car and run into the woods that stretched along the side of the highway. The patrolman turned and raced into the woods after Key. They were gone a long time. The boys strained their necks and laughed, wondering if old Tom had given the road patrolman the slip. Margaret and her mother smiled and shook their heads, trying to decide who was going to put up the money to get Tom Key out of jail.

When the two men finally came back out of the woods, Tom Key was walking in front of the patrolman. He was holding his side as if he were in pain, and he stumbled as he tried to walk. The patrolman pushed him once in the back, and then again.

As the patrolman pushed him the second time, Tom Key tripped and fell in the muddy grass at the edge of the highway. Gordon Paul stumbled over him and fell on his knees just to the side of the black man. Key scrambled and tried to get away again, but he was too full of liquor and too stiff to move fast. Before Tom Key could get fully to his feet, Gordon Paul pulled out his service revolver and shot him dead.

Across the road, Margaret Key screamed and collapsed on the porch.

It was May 3, 1975. South Carolina's Bloody Summer of '75 had begun.

By the spring of 1975, the rulers of South Carolina had good reason to believe that the days of the Movement

were over in their state. After a long and bitter struggle, Jim Crow segregation had finally ended. Black people were moving into the mainstream in all areas of South Carolina life. The marches, boycotts and demonstrations of the '60s were fading into memory. Black leaders throughout the state seemed more interested in consolidating their gains than they were in continuing the confrontations of the past. Integration had been painful for South Carolina's white ruling class, but they had come through it and were still in control. In the words of the old Uncle Remus song, everything about race relations in South Carolina seemed "satisfactual."

But the black workers of South Carolina were not satisfied. The right to vote and the right to eat at lunch counters were great goals in 1963, but after enjoying them for a few years black people found that they were not much to get excited over. The gains black workers had made in employment in the first few years of the '70s were almost completely wiped out during the recession of '74. White politicians had stopped complaining about the "lazy niggers" in their public speeches, but the same politicians who made those speeches in the '60s were still in power in 1975. Most blacks did not trust them. There was a deep discontent against the white policemen who still patrolled the black communities. Time and again, they showed that their real job was to "keep the common niggers in their place."

While the black middle class enjoyed the gains they had made, the common black people of South Carolina watched the situation uneasily.

When a white person kills a black person in a small Southern com-



Jim French/The Charleston Chronicle

Memorial Service for Tom Key sponsored by the Black Star Organization and held at South Carolina Highway Patrol Office.

munity, anger and fear race through the black settlements like storm clouds rushing across a summer sky. Southern black communities have long memories, and many have seen the deaths of family members and friends go unpunished. The fear and anger is like a fever that snatches the community and shakes it. People reach for their pistols and shotguns, promising that they'll "take one along" if they have to die. Ministers preach sermons, and congregations shout, "That's right!" The conversation is in every juke joint and along every highway. The black community turns its angry gaze towards the white community, and each black person feels deep in the heart that "this time it has gone too far."

South Carolina had seen several such isolated killings during the first half of the '70s. The white rulers knew that it could be a dangerous situation, but they also knew what to do to contain it. If the white folks stayed cool, the anger would swell like a bubble gum full of air and then harmlessly burst. It would be tough going for a while, but they had the tools to isolate the anger to one community and keep it from spreading.

The morning after the murder of Tom Key in the quiet Lowcountry town of Moncks Corner, there was little to indicate that this situation

would end up differently. But before the anger could blow over, a second black man was murdered. One week after the killing of Tom Key, a white Orangeburg County sheriff's deputy shot and killed a 19-year-old black youth named Emmanuel Fogle. Deputy Clark Ryder had been chasing Fogle only to investigate a possible stolen car. There were no other charges against the youth. When Emmanuel Fogle was killed, he was unarmed and trying to hide in the bottom of a 10-foot-deep ditch.

It was not finished. On May 31, Earl Miller was shot and killed by a white police officer in Conway. Miller was unarmed, and police had come to his house to settle a domestic dispute. On July 26, Herbie Morton was shot and killed by a white highway patrol officer in Greenwood. On October 19, Marvin Muldrow was shot and killed by a white city police officer in Florence. Both Miller and Morton were unarmed and had been stopped for traffic violations.

In each case, the police officers claimed self-defense.

The anger of the black communities swelled and exploded across the state. Each community saw a conspiracy to kill black men, and each community looked for the next murder to happen outside its door.

The established news media treated

the killings as one long combined incident. An article in the November 10 issue of *Newsweek* read: "South Carolina's blacks believe [there] is a systematic pattern of police brutality by white cops against blacks. . . . Though the incidents involved separate police forces and have no apparent connections, all six have occurred in roughly similar circumstances." In August, the Associated Press said, "The killings of blacks by white law officers, and ensuing demonstrations, investigations, coroner's inquests and murder trials have become a familiar sight in South Carolina this summer."

The black-owned *Charleston Chronicle* called the killings "a declaration of war on the black community."

In such a climate, black people across the state were ready to be mobilized and organized to deal with police violence. More so than any other organization, the South Carolina NAACP and its local branches seized the leadership of that struggle and set its tone and direction. But under NAACP leadership, so oriented to the black middle class, the Bloody Summer struggles suffered confusion, betrayal and finally death.

In four of the cities where the Bloody Summer killings took place,

local NAACP chapters led the black response. While denouncing the killings in the most militant of terms, they channeled black activity into nonviolent demonstrations. All actions were geared towards forcing local authorities to bring the individual police officer accused of wrongdoing to trial. And when each one of the four police officers was cleared by the courts, the NAACP activity either stopped immediately or slowly wound down to nothing.

One example of this failed strategy was in the city of Florence. Several days following the killing of Marvin Muldrow by the city police officer, a huge number of black people gathered in a local church under the sponsorship of the Florence NAACP. During the meeting, black youths smashed the windows of a carload of whites who rode by the church shouting "niggers!" Within a few minutes, some of the black youths moved down the street and broke out windows in several white businesses near the church. Only a small number of youths participated, and city police quickly moved in to disperse the crowd and stop the violence.

But James Edwards, the Republican governor of South Carolina, felt he had to show his constituency that he was not giving in to the black community. Edwards ordered the National Guard into Florence on standby alert. The morning after the church meeting, Florence city police began a military occupation of black neighborhoods. Checkpoints were set up in various strategic areas. Black people riding or walking through the area were routinely stopped, searched and checked for identification. Helicopters patrolled the skies over the black district. All this was done in the name of "preventing violence."

Instead of denouncing this reaction from the state and the police, NAACP officials praised it. NAACP state field director Isaac Williams said that he was "awed and fascinated by the fact that law enforcement in Florence has the flexibility . . . to use more than maximum restraint." And when the NAACP sponsored a march in downtown Florence the following weekend to protest the Muldrow killing, Florence NAACP president Frank Gilbert publicly promised marchers that the Florence police would be present to protect them from "the more militant black factions."

NAACP officials argued that they took such positions to prevent any possible rioting, but it was clear that they were more interested in stopping any activity which was not under their direct control and which did not follow their strict policy of taking the struggle through the court system. Similarly, when black students boycotted South Florence High School as a protest against the Muldrow killing, Gilbert condemned it. "We want the students to understand that we [the NAACP] want to keep this out of the schools," he said in a statement to local reporters. "We want the educational process to continue."

NAACP leadership also prevailed in Orangeburg, Conway and Greenwood. But in Moncks Corner, the scene of the first Bloody Summer murder, the situation was much different. In Moncks Corner, the Bloody Summer struggle was led from the beginning by a small local group called the Black Star Organization. The BSO was a collection of black workers and community activists, several of whom had originally been members of the Moncks Corner branch of the NAACP. In fact, the organization formed in the spring of 1975 largely because the local NAACP failed to take any action about the murder of Tom Key.

As one of its first actions, the BSO demanded that highway patrolman Gordon Paul be removed from all law enforcement duties in the state of South Carolina. To enforce that demand, the BSO organized a black boycott of the major white businesses in the town of Moncks Corner. The boycott lasted until June of 1976, more than one year after the killing. To supplement the boycott, the organization held monthly protest marches through Moncks Corner's downtown section. And each week, the BSO distributed thousands of leaflets and newsletters around the county to explain its positions, announce its activities and bring news of Bloody Summer actions from other parts of the state.

When state and local NAACP officials were asked to support the boycott, they refused. The national NAACP had only recently been sued by a group of white Mississippi business owners over an NAACP-sponsored boycott, and South Carolina officials were afraid the same thing might happen to them. The suit demanded \$2 million in damages for the lost

business caused by what the local white businessmen called a restraint of their free trade. Such a suit reflected both the threat well-organized pressure posed for the white power structure and the vulnerability of a national civil-rights organization with a substantial treasury to a legal attack. With little money to lose even if their group was sued, BSO members argued that they did not see the need for an organization that was afraid to take action to protect the lives of black citizens.

If the NAACP had endorsed the boycott, local black church leaders would have joined and urged their congregations to support it. BSO members estimated that with active church assistance they could have kept 90 percent of the black community out of the white stores, and they could have quickly brought town officials to their knees. When the NAACP refused to endorse this boycott, timid church leaders had an easy out. But even without this critical support, the BSO boycott was 50 percent successful for almost the entire year.

In none of the Bloody Summer cities were the black communities able to get the accused police officers permanently removed. But Gordon Paul of Moncks Corner was the only officer to be kept off active duty for any great length of time. While officers in Orangeburg, Conway, Greenwood and Florence were put back out on the streets within a few weeks after the killings, Gordon Paul remained at a desk job for nine months following the death of Tom Key. Gordon Paul was also the only officer who was never brought to trial for the Bloody Summer killings. Since his court trial seemed destined to vindicate his action, the BSO never made prosecution of Paul a central demand.

The BSO said that its partial victory came because of three major differences with the NAACP strategy. While the BSO was not afraid to take militant actions designed to hurt local white businesses, the NAACP tried to accommodate itself to the white rulers. NAACP action ended with the courtroom acquittals, while the BSO said from the beginning that it had no faith that justice could be achieved in the courts. And while the NAACP consistently showed its contempt for and fear of the masses, the BSO regularly explained its positions to the black community through meetings



Jim French/The Charleston Chronicle

Black leaders at the South Carolina state capitol, January 15, 1976

and leaflets and argued that the political education of black people was one major goal of the struggle.

While the BSO and the NAACP were arguing over strategies, South Carolina's white power structure busily mounted a counterattack to (1) make it appear the police and not the black community was under attack; and (2) make sure that black anger was channeled into safe areas. For the most part, they were successful in both areas.

After he was continuously asked about police attacks on unarmed black citizens, the chief of the South Carolina Highway Patrol told a *Newsweek* reporter in November that the shootings would not have happened if blacks would stop "going out at three a.m., raping and violating the law." Noting that 15 police officers had been killed by black people in the state in recent years (and he emphasized the fact that this had been done by *black people*), Governor Edwards said, "We cannot let law enforcement elements be held at bay by criminals in South Carolina." *The State* newspaper in Columbia accused the NAACP of "racism" for protesting the killings, and said that the organization "shows

signs of becoming more the troublemaker than the peacemaker." The *Columbia Record* also criticized the NAACP, calling it "a bad business — this harping on color differentials in the area of law enforcement."

In an attack on the Black Star Organization, *The Berkeley Democrat* newspaper said, "We see no reason that any pressure group should be allowed to force the denial of [Gordon Paul's] right to pursue the vocation of his choice."

In a July editorial, *The Charleston Evening Post* gave a clear and ominous warning to all black South Carolinians: "Policemen, like everyone else, are human and make mistakes. Good citizenship as well as common sense tells us they should be respected and obeyed, especially in a tense situation. Some citizens would be alive today if they had heeded this cautionary counsel."

Local observers saw the hand of the white rulers in changes made by the NAACP in dealing with the killings. During a statewide NAACP meeting in June, held just after the first three killings took place, a local delegate suggested that the organization set up a statewide task force to

study police brutality in South Carolina. In the heat of the early black anger against the killings, the motion passed. In August, NAACP leaders held a well-publicized meeting with Governor Edwards to discuss the tense situation around the state. During the meeting, the leaders suggested that the governor set up biracial citizens committees to study whether law enforcement officers in the state were racially biased.

Critical differences emerged between the original proposal adopted by the NAACP in June and the proposal presented to the governor in August. The panel would now be chosen by a conservative Republican governor, rather than by the NAACP itself. It would be biracial, something which was not specifically spelled out in the original proposal. And rather than specifically studying police brutality and the Bloody Summer killings, it would now be spread along the more general topic of racial bias.

The governor agreed to appoint the committee.

Responsibility for gathering the

information for the new Governor's Committee on Police-Community Relations was given to the state Human Affairs Commission, headed by Jim Clyburn, a black politician. He revealed his position on the real cause of the disturbances in August when he announced in a speech that South Carolina police had an "image problem." "Unless we can change the people's attitude toward the police, we are not going to do anything about the problem. . . . Police need a good public relations program." The governor echoed his comments and said he was shocked to learn that black South Carolinians did not have faith in the justice system. "Our system of justice works," the governor declared, "and we are going to have to sell this."

The Human Affairs Commission did not complete its study until April of 1976, and the Governor's Committee finally issued its report in September. By then, the fires of the Bloody Summer protests had cooled. And instead of dealing with the original NAACP proposal to study police brutality, the committee's report focused on how police could respond to the problem of its "bad image" in the black community.

Sometime during the fall of 1975, the NAACP came up with a plan to revive its political standing in the black community. NAACP leaders had been under attack for several months — from the press and white power structure for being too militant and irresponsible and from the BSO and others for selling out. The NAACP strategy in each of the Bloody Summer cities had been to hold one big march to help the community "blow off steam." It was only natural that the NAACP would decide to have one big statewide march for the same purpose.

The January 15 march on the state capitol was originally set up to make two major demands. The first demand was for the state legislature to make Martin Luther King's birthday a state holiday. The second demand was for law enforcement officials to stop the Bloody Summer killings. A broad coalition of religious, civic and community organizations was brought in to help organize and support the march.

NAACP officials felt they had good reason to bring the King birthday demand into the Bloody Summer

protests. They argued that more people would turn out if the King birthday demand was included. This was questionable, since local NAACP chapters had organized local marches of as many as 3,000 people during the summer protests. The real reason, however, was that the NAACP felt more middle-class black people would respond to a march to celebrate King's birthday. These people were needed to counter the possibility that black workers and community activists might respond to the rhetoric of black radicals scheduled to be speakers and turn the march into a militant rally.

The second reason the King birthday demand was included was that NAACP officials needed a victory. State officials had made it clear that they were going to protect their police officers at all cost, regardless of the charges against them. NAACP leaders thought there was a chance that the state would give them an out by granting the King holiday. A victory on the King birthday would turn NAACP leaders into statewide heroes and would cloud the fact that they had made no progress on preventing the Bloody Summer killings.

The January 15 march was a huge success in terms of numbers. Some 10,000 black people (and a handful of whites) marched five miles through downtown Columbia, then listened to speakers on the steps of the state capitol for over two hours. Government and black leaders alike called it "the largest civil-rights demonstration in the history of the state."

It was also probably one of the least effective in South Carolina history. The state legislature refused to grant a state holiday for Martin Luther King's birthday. And while 10,000 people stood in chilly weather listening to speeches condemning police brutality, the House of Representatives adopted a resolution praising the 29 law enforcement officers killed in the state in the line of duty during the previous decade. The resolution said that most South Carolinians believed that the police try to enforce laws "in an equitable and judicious manner for the good of all."

Even in the midst of the march, the betrayal of the black community continued unchecked. Black state legislators knew that the legislature had rejected the march demands even before the speeches began on the

capitol steps, but they never relayed this information to the crowd outside. Most marchers did not learn about the rejection until they heard it on their car radios on the way home or read about it in the paper the next morning.

The failure of the January 15 march began when the demand for the King birthday holiday was included. The birthday demand became the main theme for the march, and the media and many middle-class leaders eagerly downplayed the police issue. Of the 22 persons who spoke on the capitol steps that day, only three talked about the problem of the police. Key organizers of the march seemed satisfied that it took place and uninterested in following it up. For several years afterward, NAACP officials and black politicians used the march as a threat to hold over the state. But neither group ever officially informed the black community on the results of the march, nor organized a response to the rejection of the march's demands.

The failure to build on the Bloody Summer movement was a blow for the unified statewide struggle in South Carolina. After the Columbia march, the movement shifted to local concerns. Black organizations concentrated on electing blacks or "sympathetic whites" to office. Black workers formed the backbone of a struggling trade union movement in the state. But these were mostly local efforts, and there were no attempts to link them up again in a statewide movement.

The common black folk of South Carolina showed their willingness to struggle during the Bloody Summer of '75. The Black Star Organization and others showed some of the strategies and tactics that could be used to attack the white rulers and win demands. But under the limited vision of the middle-class leadership that dominated the South Carolina black community, people experienced betrayal and confusion, and the Bloody Summer movement was defeated. But deep in the shadows of the South Carolina plantations, the road to freedom was still open for those who dared to walk it. □

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MIAMI REBELLION

JEHU EAVES AND CHRIS LUTZ

You could characterize Miami as the Los Angeles of the South: a city of mythical glamour and tacky tourism; a city that promotes itself while allowing its citizens, old or poor, to die of hunger within its boundaries; a "city of night."

Liberty City, which borders Miami, is an unincorporated section of Dade County, Florida. Encompassing more than 500 square blocks, the neighborhood has the starkest poverty in Dade. It is a series of neighborhoods really, without any semblance of political power, plagued with rampant unemployment, decrepit housing and widespread drug abuse.

In Liberty City, site of the May, 1980, rebellion against living conditions and the police, there is hardly any person who can mention "police" without mentioning "brutality." Police are everywhere: there's a cop on the corner who beat up your brother, the cop in the quick-mart with his hand on his gun, and the cop who's hammering down your door because he's mistaken you for a dope dealer.

"These fellows are getting outrageous," said James Ward, Sr., 62, a construction worker who was beaten by cops in Liberty City in 1979. "My head has been giving me trouble ever since."

According to Dade County Public Service Department complaint figures released in January, 1980, approximately 200 cops at the core of the department exhibit a "strong pattern" of brutality. Of these, more than three dozen were assessed as mentally unstable and in need of psychiatric help. In the five years preceding the Miami uprising, an average of *one charge of police brutality was filed every other day*, a total of more than 930 charges!*

These reports represent only those victims who chose to complain, a mere tip of the iceberg. A typical victim would be a man like Reuben Mortimer. Mortimer, 40, was picked up by the police on a burglary charge; he was kicked and beaten so badly while handcuffed that he was forced to have his spleen removed. The laid-off factory worker later was shown to be innocent.

The majority of the victims had

never been arrested before. Overwhelmingly, they were unarmed. They were not picked up for committing violent crimes and, in fact, most were stopped for traffic violations or for hanging out on a street corner. Significantly, nine out of 10 brutality victims were acquitted of all charges against them.

The battle against police brutality in Liberty City is an ongoing one. In 1970, charges of brutality were filed with the federal government by 17 black teenagers and five adults. The plaintiffs accused the Public Safety Director and 18 officers of following a "consistent pattern" of violence. About 200 residents of Liberty City — called "the combat zone" in police slang — formed a Committee of Concerned Citizens in 1973. This committee, which included over 100 taxi cab drivers, conducted several protests against police activities before its dissolution in 1976.

Only months before the police murder of Arthur McDuffie, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People publicly called upon the Justice Department to investigate instances of brutality in Miami. Not until the rebellion sparked by the acquittal of McDuffie's killers, over a year later, did the federal government see fit to make such an investigation.

In a meeting of city residents held in the aftermath of the May uprising, one elderly white man summed up the feeling of many Miamians: "Too bad an investigation didn't occur 10 years ago. There's no need for investigations now. There's a need for prosecutions."

Arthur McDuffie, a sales manager for Coastal State Life Insurance Company, left the home of Carolyn Battle on December 17, 1979, to return to his sister's house, where he lived. Almost immediately police stopped him, apparently for a traffic violation. He tried to outrun the police, and eight minutes later he was being beaten with flashlights and nightsticks by an estimated 10 to 20 cops. His frontal brain lobes were destroyed, and he lapsed into a coma. Four days later McDuffie died at Jackson Memorial Hospital.

While some cops dropped McDuffie off at the hospital, others demolished his motorcycle, trying to make it ap-

pear he had been in a routine accident. The initial police report stated that McDuffie killed himself while fleeing police.

Five Miami policemen eventually were brought to trial for the murder. The heaviest charge state prosecutor Janet Reno preferred against the five was manslaughter. Charges were also filed for tampering with evidence.

This was not the first time that these defendants were charged with the type of abuse that was exposed during the trial. The five had been named in 47 citizen complaints, 13 internal reviews and 55 use-of-force reports. Three of them are among those the department determined need psychiatric aid. Only one of them, William Hanlon (called "Mad Dog" by fellow officers), had ever been reprimanded by his department.

Despite evidence presented by the prosecution in the case (Dade County's medical examiner testified that he was "aghast and horrified" by McDuffie's condition), the all-white, six-man jury brought back a verdict of not guilty on all counts.

Within minutes, Liberty City was alerted. When the news was telephoned to a local Lum's, according to state NAACP president Charles Cherry, "The reaction was immediate and loud, but somehow no one refused to believe it. Somehow, we all thought it could happen, that justice was not available for blacks, especially when they are up against white policemen."

The local NAACP put out a call to the black community for a rally at the Dade County Justice Building at seven p.m. Seven thousand gathered there, and, while people in the crowd harmonized on old-time justice tunes, the police attacked.

"At about 8:50 p.m., the police deliberately raced two cars, with lights flashing, through the center of the crowd," recalled state ACLU director Eleanor Ginzberg. "The mood of that crowd changed immediately. Ten minutes after that, a car was turned over and burned."

The crowd smashed the plate glass door in the Justice Building, then tore the door off its hinges. Cars were overturned as people surged towards the Dade County Public Safety Building; SWAT squads responded with dogs and tear gas.

The rebellion against all that the

* Local reporters compiled these figures only after a court order opened previously secret department files to the public eye.

acquittal represented lasted three nights and caused over \$200 million worth of damage. Most of the damage was confined to Liberty City, where police drove the black protestors and National Guardsmen contained them at gunpoint. "The authorities are directly responsible for this happening," Ginzberg commented. "The place was ready to go. This was a tragedy, built on racism that is part and parcel of that community."

Walking through Liberty City on Tuesday after the uprising, it seemed as though an enormous wrecking ball had swung down from the clouds. On every major thoroughfare, jagged low walls indicated where businesses had existed. Smoke from still-smoldering buildings and armed National Guard troops at every turn gave an eerie air to the nearly empty streets.

During the heat of the uprising, newspaper stories included wild exaggerations and completely fabricated tales. For example, in a famous story entitled "To Strike At Anything White," *Newsweek* reported that "Po-

lice found one man with his ear and his tongue cut off and a bullet wound in his abdomen. A red rose had been stuffed in his mouth." In point of fact, the gentleman — sans rose — was beaten and mutilated by a crowd angered because he aimed his car at and ran over a black child playing in her front yard. The child was permanently crippled.

"The TV stations come in, turn their lights on and ask you what happened," a James Scott housing project resident complained. "Then when you turn on the six o'clock news, all you see is burning and all you hear is how white people got hurt."

After the fog enveloping the media cleared, it was apparent that, rather than a wholesale massacre of white passers-by, police and Klan types were responsible for most of the 14 deaths. For example, Allen Mills was shot in the back by the police before curfew while riding his bike. Lafontant Bien-aime died from police bullets while driving his van. Nine blacks died, as did four whites and a Latino man.

An elderly black woman later commented sadly, "Well, in every revolution, some innocent people are killed."

Jackson Memorial Hospital reported that, by Wednesday morning, they had treated 196 people for injuries. Police arrested about 600 blacks; they claim that nearly 4,000 law officers were unable to track down a car full of whites who patrolled Liberty City for three days, shooting at black people and killing two, Thomas Reece and Eugene Brown.

The Justice Department's Community Relations Service and nationally known black leaders collaborated to try and cool down the community. Their success was, to describe it moderately, limited.

Andrew Young was booed off the stage at Tacolcy Center by young people. The director of Tacolcy, Otis Pitts, said, "Blowing in and out of town is not what we need."

Jesse Jackson, disdainful of powwows with officials at first, strode into Liberty City and arranged a meeting with the press and about one dozen "spokesmen" for the community. Ralph McCartney, an old hand in Liberty City, laughingly commented, "Jesse Jackson went out on the street and picked up the winos."

Among whites there is a remarkable amount of sentiment supportive of the rebellion. The Citizens Coalition for Racial Justice was formed, in the words of a member, because "Whites were frustrated and didn't know what to do." CCRJ members "nailed" federal officials in Miami, winning a promise that the federal government would investigate the McDuffie case. The whites and Latinos in the coalition endorsed the rebellion's underlying intent and played a large role in publicly opposing the characterization of the disturbance as a "race riot."

"Nearly four months after the violence, the effort to solve Liberty City's problems remains embryonic. . . . Whether it will all come together, and how much good it will really do, won't be known for years," commented the *Miami Herald* in September, summing up the attempts to address the demands of the city's black community. This assessment is a very sober one, based on an examination of the programs ostensibly designed to solve the black community's problems.

During the uprising, numerous neighborhood groups presented de-



mands to the city and press which included the creation of a civilian review board of police, with subpoena power; jobs; a revamping of the electoral and justice systems; political refugee status for Haitians; and much more.

After May, there was a flurry of activity on the parts of the government and private sector to "find out what these people want." Again, Liberty City residents reiterated their demands at numerous public meetings. Proposals in response came as frequently as Miami rains.

A federal grand jury indicted one police officer: Charles Veverka, targeted by a Carter task force for violating Arthur McDuffie's civil rights, was the sole officer willing to trade incriminating information against the other four killers for immunity from state prosecution. The task force then disappeared, buried with a statement by Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti. He declared that he would not organize a "witch hunt" to investigate police, and indicated that the federal government would back off from a thorough investigation.

In December, 1980, Veverka was tried — and acquitted — for violating McDuffie's civil rights. The trial, first slated for Miami, was rescheduled for Atlanta, and finally moved to San Antonio, Texas. Denis Dean, Veverka's co-counsel, applauded the final choice of San Antonio because blacks make up only eight to 10 percent of the population and because "I like the military aspect of the city."

"The system is only going to help the system," declared Frankie Askew, a self-described "ghetto mother" of eight who lives on the outskirts of Liberty City.

Mrs. Askew, a veteran community activist in fights for tenants' rights and day care, is skeptical about government and private sector promises of relief for the black community: "I'm tired of hearing well-written speeches. I want to hear the truth from someone's heart."

Sitting in her plant- and flower-filled living room she gave an example. "The governor appointed a commission. The commission started having hearings. People appeared there and voiced their opinions. Then," she concluded sarcastically, "the commission was disbanded."

Although numerous plans and analyses, with accompanying rhetoric,

have been discussed by government officials, the only concrete, constructive relief to Liberty City has been in the form of loans to businesses.

Dade County spent \$450,000 clearing debris and razing shells of buildings burned down during the rebellion. Federal authorities approved \$10.6 million in loans to the 123 white-owned businesses injured. County and city authorities agreed with the federal government that the Overtown neighborhood, a black community, is a "slum and blighted area" and therefore should be destroyed in order to make way for a shopping center. About \$5 million in loans to begin minority businesses was allocated to the City of Miami by the White House. And finally, the Florida legislature created a Revitalization Board of 11 members without any power. The board plans to use "moral authority" to coordinate nonexistent relief.

Literally not one cent nor one ounce of organization from the government has been applied to the real, long-term needs of Liberty City residents.

Homer Brennan, living in the James Scott housing project in the heart of Liberty City, believes that government inactivity and half-measures create only "more frustration."

He described a temporary jobs program for senior citizens that "isn't any good as far as hardcore poor, elderly blacks here are concerned." The under-minimum-wage payment for a four-hour work day is just enough to raise income-based rent in the project, but unfortunately not enough to pay the increase. "So why go through the paperwork?" he asked. He acknowledged that a few young people were given summer jobs by the county, but now are "having a hard time receiving their last paychecks."

One of the demands that arose from many groups during the rebellion was for an all-civilian police review board with subpoena power. With a flourish of publicity, the city manager's office created a completely powerless board that will "monitor complaints" about the police. The board, composed of only two civilians, plus a member of the Fraternal Order of Police, a representative of the police chief's office and an assistant city manager, will be kept apprised of the work of the police internal security section. A civilian staff of four people will set up six offices in which they

will be accessible to any organization that wishes to voice its opinions about the police. Board members and staff will all be hired or appointed by the city manager; final decisions on expressing opinions or communicating with citizens publicly will be made by the police chief and the city manager.

In July, the City Commission decided to increase the police force to 914 officers by September, 1981, with a short-term goal of 814. Recruiting, processing and training time will be cut from 51 weeks to 32 to 34 weeks.

The commission assured the public that the hiring would be consistent with the police force's affirmative action program. The program, which arose from a Justice Department suit against discrimination in 1972, is eventually supposed to bring the City of Miami police force's makeup into line with the city's population makeup: about 25 percent black, 25 percent white and 50 percent Latino. In 1974, the total black and Latino representation on the force was 21.8 percent; currently, the total is 36 percent.

The beefing up of the police force is accompanied by a renewed license to kill that is an earmark of the Miami force. On June 13, 1980, Officer Gerald Schwartz killed Claudio Lima while off-duty, shooting him several times, allegedly in self-defense. Schwartz has been accused 13 times of abusing civilians, and the police department upheld the accusations five times. His only "punishment" has been a reassignment to administrative duties. A quick trip to the desk is standard City of Miami police procedure for police officers whose abuses in Liberty City are exposed.

As they did for a short time after the 1968 and '70 rebellions here, the police "are relating to very young kids, going around and giving them candy, playing with them," remarked Brennan. "But they still jump out of their cars with shotguns!"

The response of the private sector to the May disturbance can be summed up in two words: minority business.

The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and the Miami-Dade Chamber (with, respectively, mainly white and mainly black members) have started a program that advises minority loan applicants, refers them to potentially sympathetic banks and encourages Chamber members to buy minority goods and services.

In a sense, Liberty City has long been an independent entity. The section was built up during the 1920s by Alonso Kelly, a black realtor who convinced other blacks to move there for "liberty" from the overcrowded ghetto in west Miami, "colored town."

"Liberty City was a place where I longed to live," reminisced Bea Hines for the *Miami Herald* after the 1970 rebellion. "The apartments had yards with real grass and some even had flowers. . . . Everybody in Liberty City knew everybody else, if only by face. And a one-block walk down the sidewalk could really tire the tongue and jaws because nobody dared walk past a porch without a smile or greeting."

While Bea Hines was growing up, five or six families lived on a block. Urban renewal and migration from the country into the only community in which blacks could acceptably live caused overcrowding. The borders stayed tightly shut; during the Korean War, the Ku Klux Klan bombed Carver's Village because it was constructed "too close to whites."

The population grew to 75 or 80 families per block. "Instead of grass, black asphalt parking lots went right up to the front door," Hines recollected.

Finally, in the summer of 1968, Liberty City erupted for three days. Police killed three black men, and about \$100,000 worth of damage was done to businesses.

The outcome of that rebellion is a by-now familiar story. Metropolitan Dade's Department of Housing and Urban Development (Little HUD) promised to build decent streets and sidewalks within five years. Little HUD also planned to modernize 1,734 public housing units in the James Scott and Liberty Square housing projects, develop a park, build a family health facility and create a sewage system for both housing projects, using a \$3 million federal grant.

Dade County chipped in, promising two swimming pools for Liberty City, and the Model Cities program allocated \$9.6 million for relief.

The outcome, however, was that no parks, no pools, no decent health facility evolved. Housing unit modernization was slapped together and sank in a morass of red tape. At the time, John Bennet of the Tacolcy Center commented, "That \$9.6 million, what's that going to do? That's not going to do anything but pay salaries. We've got a \$150 million sewage

problem out here."

The programs aimed at eliminating unemployment were equally inadequate. The federally funded Concentrated Employment Program and the Chamber of Commerce offered a total of 1,561 jobs and training positions. In 1969, the unemployment rate in Liberty City was already an official eight percent, almost 3,000 people.

"There were very few changes for young people," Mrs. Askew said, "but some good things came out of the '68 rebellion. Before that time, young blacks, when they got out of high school, couldn't find work to do. After that, they were finding places for them; the government was sending money down. Probably if it hadn't been that way, they might still be walking the streets." She added, "Some still are."

"For two summers, I had to go raise holy hell to get my child a job," she smiled. "I had to make sure they did not give him a runaround. If they're going to give anyone a runaround, let it be his mama, because his mama isn't going to stand for it." The many who did not benefit from the scanty jobs programs in 1968 and 1969 are remembered poignantly by Mrs. Askew; her son's best friend of those years, who did not receive a job, was involved recently in a street-killing incident.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority conceded a bus line from Liberty City to Miami Beach in 1969 for service workers, and promised to "study" the question of bus lines to Hialeah, where factories that would hire blacks were located.

In 1967, the Florida legislature told the state welfare department that it must write its welfare checks in 1968 from a small, set fund. As a result, in June of 1968, nearly 25,000 people in Dade County qualified for welfare, but only 65 percent of their basic needs could be covered by their checks. By June of 1969, almost 5,000 people had been added to the rolls, and their checks covered only an average 60 percent of needs.

After the '68 uprising, Police Chief Walter Headley died. He had been criticized in a federal report after the rebellion as having "carried virtually unchanged into the late 1960s policies of dealing with minority groups which had been applied in Miami in the 1930s." Bernard Garmire, who instituted a community relations program



Homer Brennan at a meeting of the Citizens Committee for Racial Justice

for the force, succeeded him. The program, a candy-for-kids concept, soon withered away. Meanwhile, police in the Central Zone's Liberty City retained carte blanche brutality privileges.

The drive into Liberty City's housing project is an excursion behind Miami's glittering facade of tourist brochures. This neighborhood is not so much a residential section as it is a warehouse for storing cheap labor to be employed by the low-wage hotels and restaurants that form the backbone of Miami's tourist industry. Like any other tourist trap, Miami is without the diversification in its economy that allows for the stable development of various types of industry. The tourist industry grows like a weed that chokes off almost everything else.

Homer Brennan, who is a member of the Scott Family, a community-based organization formed after the May uprising, declared, "The conditions in this project are terrible. The electrical system is a fire hazard; the gas lines around here leak; the plumbing is awful. Some days you go out and the sewage has completely backed up and it will sit there until the sun dries it out. Do you realize the bacteria? The windows have no screens or are broken; it hasn't been painted in years; whenever it rains, the telephones go out. There are no pay phones around here, plus try to get a repair man!"

Brennan feels that money should be given to Scott Project to hire someone to lead sports programs for the youth. He believes that young people care about the conditions in the community: "They say, 'We care. We don't mind going to the Tenants' Council meeting. But nothing ever happens.' It's just like when you vote for a representative. They come with promises, win [the election] and then cut the CETA money." The young father decided to run for a seat on the Tenants' Council because current members are not "downtown banging on doors every day and organizing Scott Project into a voting bloc."

Only one in 15 youths in this project has a job, Brennan estimates. The official statistics are telling: 501 families are on welfare out of a total of 762 families in the project. The average income for a project family is

\$4,500; more than half do not even have an income of \$4,000. The family structure of the average Scott household consists of a mother trying to make ends meet for several children on welfare and food stamps that cover about half of their basic needs.

Scott Project was the scene of Miami's second 1980 rebellion. In July, two of the most pressing problems of Miami's black community — jobs and police brutality — came together to catalyze the uprising.

On the morning of July 15, more than 600 teenagers appeared at a job fair sponsored by CETA. They were angered to find only 200 jobs available, most calling for skills that few of the youths possessed.

Later that day, police attempted to arrest several teenagers who, police allege, were involved in a robbery attempt. The mother of one of the youths was treated shabbily by the officers, and then officers beat another teenager in front of about two dozen onlookers. The crowd first reacted by taunting the police, and eventually drove them off with rocks and gunfire that wounded one officer. Police reinforcements also were driven off by a crowd that had grown to number several hundred people. By midnight, four more police were wounded by gunfire and another injured by a metal pipe thrown through a patrol car window.

Government officials, the police department and certain elements in the black community worked furiously to portray this so-called "mini-riot" as the apolitical doings of a handful of "hooligans."

Marvin Dunn, a black university professor, labeled the rebellion a "carnival" and claimed that blacks had "lost the moral edge" through it. Robert Dempsey, acting director for the Dade County Public Safety Department, said, "Right now, the area is under the control of the criminal element, people with guns."

"What we have now is a bunch of hooligans. We don't want a racial incident," remarked Henry Witherpoon of the same department.

Governor Bob Graham called the rebellion "the problem of well-organized and well-armed hoodlums attempting, by use of guerrilla tactics, to take over the housing area."

President Jimmy Carter, speaking in Jacksonville, Florida, on the second night of the mini-rebellion, piously

placed blame for the rebellions on the leadership in the black community, Cuban refugees and the local government, and adeptly sidestepped the effects of four years of his economic and social policies on Miami.

In the midst of all this, the Dade Police Benevolent Society called for a removal of the "restraints" that had been imposed on the police since May. Shortly afterwards, the Congress of Racial Equality and "Cops for Christ" joined in the negative characterization of the rebellion by counter-demonstrating in Liberty City, while the Civil Rights Commission suggested that the staff and resources of the Justice Department's Community Relations Service be expanded to prevent "riots."

Homer Brennan and Frankie Askew are concerned about the future of Liberty City, but take a different view from public officials and black "leaders."

"You see a lot of happiness in this community, a lot of pretty kids flocking around," Brennan stressed. "There are no YMCAs for them, no Boys' Clubs, *nothing* to keep the kids from getting involved in the nasty little things that adults do to survive."

Mrs. Askew declared, "One of the reasons that attitudes have not yet changed here is that the rebellion was based on the criminal justice system, and *that's* still the same thing. It's a shame to say I've got three grown sons and every one of them left here to find a future. Don't you think I want one of my sons here with me? But there's no future here."

She believes that "Young people need to be heard, and they don't really have anyone who wants to listen to them. The government says, 'We're just going to dish this out to quiet you down,' and young people are saying, 'You've been our voice for so long. We want our own voices.'" □

Jehu Eaves has been active in the black liberation movement since his high school years. He served as a staff member for the February 2, 1980, March in Greensboro and worked for The Southern Struggle, the newspaper of the Southern Conference Educational Fund. Chris Lutz has been a SCEF staff member since 1978, and is currently editor of The Southern Struggle.

JAMES ORANGE WITH THE PEOPLE

James Orange symbolizes the best of the Movement, and is proof that it lives on today. "I was a nobody before I got involved," he says. "A lot of people could say that, but I know it's true for me."

At 20, Orange lost his job in his hometown of Birmingham after his white boss saw him on television with other demonstrators, challenging the authority of Bull Connor and his police dogs. James soon found himself immersed in the Birmingham Movement and thereafter he became captured by its vision of love, hope and struggle.

He now shares that vision and his powerful energies with a vast network of friends, contacts and fellow "unsung heroes of the Movement" who are spread across the country, in small towns and big cities where he led marches, took beatings, sang freedom songs and went to jail.

This interview by Bob Hall was taped in January, 1981, in sessions sandwiched between Orange's annual organizing duties as march coordinator for the Martin Luther King Birthday celebration in Atlanta. We began in a furniture-less apartment converted to his temporary headquarters. In between frequent telephone calls and passing out assignments to a small squad of volunteers, James told his story. "Hey," he said at one point, "this is something I never did before! We got to get more folks doing this. There are so many people, man, who really made the Movement who never get heard from."

I give Reverend Charles Billups credit for my getting involved in the Civil Rights Movement. He was an insurance man that worked our neighborhood. But in 1963, the Birmingham Movement began — they was marching and protesting around town — and Reverend Billups was a leader in that. The Klan caught him getting off work one night and beat him up, tied him to a tree and left him for dead. And about three or four days later he was back on the streets, selling insurance and trying to get people to come to the mass meeting. He just told me, he said, "We got this little preacher from Montgomery, Martin Luther King, and we should come out and hear him." So I said, "They're nonviolent, and I'm *not* nonviolent, so I don't need to waste the time going down."

I was one of the young folks in Birmingham at that time that had a little influence with other young people in my community, through the church — I was raised in a Holiness church — and through football. I played ball all through school, and I went off and tried to play pro football, man. I went to a farm team with the Detroit Lions, but got injured and came home. So I was sort of known around by other young people.

Reverend Billups wanted me to get more involved, so I did go to that mass meeting at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. Ralph Abernathy got up and started speaking. I guess his speech was the thing that really touched me, that made me want to get involved. He talked about how the police had the church bugged and acted like there was a little bitty bug on the podium. There were two of them police, sitting in the back of the church because they came to all the mass meetings. Ralph was telling the police and the power structure in Birmingham what we was gonna do.

And I said, "Now this dude's got to be crazy, or either he's bad." He was leaning down over the podium, talking to the doo-hickey, saying, "Tell Bull Connor we're coming. We gonna march tomorrow, get your dogs, get your water trucks, but we're coming."

Now usually when somebody's gonna go out and do something, they don't tell them they're coming; they just sneak up on it. But these cats, they announced it. They walked up to the same folk that kids I knew had been running from — I'm talking about the Birmingham police — and just

treated them as if they didn't exist. They didn't care about getting arrested, about getting beat up or whatever. So I was puzzled, you know, for a long time.

When I first got involved, man, I was chasing a couple of sisters, and they used to be around the church every day. So my mind was really on a lot of different things. The first time I got arrested at one of the marches downtown, I got arrested because the lady that I was supposed to have been trying to hang out with had got arrested.

I kept going to the mass meetings, and I would always talk. I got fired up one day, in the basement of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church and got to talking. They were saying that they were having problems with the schools. I said, "Hell, you want the schools turned out, I'll turn em out!" And they said, "Okay, go do it." And, hey, I didn't know how to turn those schools out, but I had got my foot in it. That's when we got out and started turning out schools.

That was a part of SCLC's thing, to turn out schools. After I joined the staff, we probably turned out, in communities, a good 50 to 75 schools across the Southeast. We'd go directly to the students, completely close the schools up, shut them down. Those students were our troops because the parents were working. They couldn't go and march. And if they marched, they'd lose their jobs. But there was nothing for the kids to lose. That was the way we did it.

You talk to the students about being able to go into a restaurant or go into a department store and buy goods but yet they couldn't sit down at the lunch counter. You talk to the students about being able to go into the courthouse and have to see a fountain say "colored" and another fountain saying "white." And you had to get that fear out of their heads, and once you erased that, then we would march.

So they put me in charge of the students in Birmingham. They gave me Ensley, Fairfield and Powderly — those were three communities in Birmingham — and said that whatever you can do to turn those schools out, do it. I attended Parker High School and I told them that I knew more people at Parker than I did at those other schools. They said Parker students just wouldn't turn out

because it's a middle-class high school.

So we went down to the school, to one of the classrooms, and asked them, "Y'all wanna go march?" They said, "Yeah." And so we started walking out in the hall, singing. And we got on out and by the time we got to the door, the whole school was behind us. We marched down Eighth Avenue, down towards Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. Reverend Bevel and Andy Young and all of them, when they saw the students coming, they didn't know what to think, because that was really the largest group that they had had downtown. Some clergymen and some more adults had already been arrested that day.

When we got those kids downtown, we went to Fairfield and turned out a couple of schools in Fairfield, and on our way back we didn't have any transportation, so I had about 20 people in a Rambler. They was on the hood, on the top of the car and inside the car. The police in Fairfield stopped the car, and arrested me for driving a vehicle with too many people, inciting a riot and contributing to the delinquency of a minor. And they put me in jail. I stayed in jail for about 10 days, and that was the second time that I'd been arrested, so I really was afraid. I didn't know what was going to happen. It was about three or four days before anybody found out where I was.

When they finally got me out of jail, they just gave me an area and told me to organize it. And that was Powderly, and in the Powderly community we registered I guess about three-fourths of the people to vote.

One Sunday, Dr. King said that we was gonna have a march. I really wasn't committed to nonviolence, you know, but there was a little girl — I guess she was about four or five years old — in the park when the police and firemen were shooting the water. She had lost her parents and was there by herself. She walked past one of the dogs, and I just picked her up, and she said, "I wanna feed em, I wanna feed em."

I didn't know what she was saying, but Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth heard what she had cried. He got in the church that night and said James Orange was carrying this little kid, and the only thing the little kid was saying was she wanted freedom, she wanted freedom. He said, "The babies are even



Pet Bryant

James Orange (right) talks with a marshal in the 1980 march for poultry workers in Laurel.

talking about they want freedom." And I guess that incident sorta pushed me out front in Birmingham. And I was put on staff at \$5 a week.

Fred Shuttlesworth was the main leader — we only had one in Birmingham. Shuttlesworth had more staff folk at the Alabama Christian Movement Association, which were volunteers, than King had on the national staff of SCLC. We had a larger movement in Birmingham than there was with the Montgomery Bus Boycott. But see, the publicity went to King, it didn't come to Fred Shuttlesworth, who was out there years before Dr. King got out.

SCLC was also involved then in Gadsden, Alabama. We were running two movements simultaneously — Birmingham and Gadsden — when I started on the staff. I pulled into Gadsden once. I had Marlon Brando, Tony Franciosa and Paul Newman in a van, and the highway patrol saw me taking them to speak at a mass meeting. Entertainers had gotten involved, really involved, at that time. I left them in Gadsden, went back to Birmingham, and the next morning, they said that they wanted me to go back to Gadsden and help them with the demonstration. But when I got to Gadsden, I was arrested immediately. They told me I was Meatball, and I said I'm not Meatball. (Meatball was a brother from Birmingham who was really *the* student leader that SCLC had sort of keyed in on.) And when they arrested me, they put me on the

elevator and beat the devil out of me, from the first floor to the second floor. I took a lot of beatings in those days.

When I left Gadsden, they sent me to Danville, Virginia, and then to Texas. This was 1963. We were able to help get over 280,000 people registered to vote working with the Texas Coalition. Senator Ralph Yarborough was working with the Coalition then; it was made up of labor groups, church groups, black civil-rights groups, Chicanos and poor whites. And that coalition convinced Dr. King to send us to Texas to help. We really went to sing, to teach them freedom songs — Andrew Marisette, Liz Hayes, Robert Seals and myself. They gave us this white van, the same van that we had went to Gadsden in. I spent seven months in Texas, and that's really when I got back into the groove of trying to deal with education and pulling people from low-income communities into the whole concept of really going a lot further into education.

When I went back to Montgomery, I was immediately assigned to Jim Bevel. That's where I learned and started my teaching on nonviolence. A lot of people talk about the influence of Dr. King, but I speak about Bevel. He was my teacher. He was one of the key people that Doc attracted, one of the young ministers who chose not to be in a parish but who chose to

make the Fifth Chapter of John become a reality — making your word become flesh, taking up thy bed and walking and going under His name. That was part of my life, and I don't know what I would have done or where I'd be without it. That was what we learned, man, to love — how to love thy enemy.

So, beginning in '64, I was a part of the Bevel staff. We worked in Montgomery and in the St. Augustine, Florida, Movement during the same time. They were in St. Augustine talking about the right to swim. And we spent the spring and summer of '64 in Montgomery protesting, getting people registered to vote, getting people to go into the public school system. That was the year that blacks integrated the schools in Montgomery.

We had heard that SNCC was down in Selma and that no more than two blacks could walk up and down the street together. If more than two blacks walked up and down the street, that was considered a meeting, and Jim Clark would arrest them. They invited Dr. King to come in and speak, and he wanted somebody to go there and mobilize folk to make sure people came out for the rally. So Bevel asked me to get some students and take them to Selma, and I got about eight or 10 students from Montgomery and we went to Selma. We just got out on Main Street and started singing freedom songs downtown on a Saturday, and nobody was arrested. And the SNCC staff was amazed because they said, "We can't do this, now how can y'all do it?"

This was between New Year's and Christmas, because on January 1 of '65, Dr. King came to Selma for his first time, when we had the Emancipation March and the rally. We got this one church on the day of the first and the meeting was supposed to have been at three o'clock, but at nine o'clock that morning, the church was packed and people were all out in the streets, you know, thousands of folks. We had to open all the other churches, cancel services in all the other churches in that area, so that people would have a place to go. That's how we got the churches open. And that's what brought the Selma Movement.

The people we hear about is Dr. King, Dr. Abernathy, Andy Young, but they were basically the leaders. The media never talks about the people who got the whippings. I was

one of the folk that would go into a town first, and by the time Doctor and them got to town, we done got the whippings. But those kind of folk don't never get mentioned.

If we get another leader in our lifetime, I don't foresee it being nothing but a woman. The women's movement is a movement that's long overdue. If the story is ever told, women made black folk what they are today. Like, we had Martin Luther King as a leader, but if you check out every march that he participated in or led, every movement that he had, there were women and children, not men. The men stood on the side of the street and watched us get our butts whipped and talked about how bad they was — but they were scared. Wasn't man enough to say that he was afraid, but that's what it was, fear. And that was the way we interpreted it to the community and to people around. We got men involved like that. We've had movements, man, we told women, don't even go to bed with him if he won't stand up for you. In a couple of cities that worked. Men was coming around, saying, "Man, my wife has got me sleeping on the couch, I got to come down here and help."

This happened down in Selma — not Selma, but this happened in Marion, Alabama, about 20-some miles from Selma. See, we give credit to Selma, but it wasn't Selma that brought the 1965 Voters' Rights Act, it was places like Marion, Eutaw, Greensboro. See, we never could motivate people in Selma, Alabama. We motivated young folk, but the adults that participated in the Selma Movement, those adults came from Marion, Greensboro, surrounding areas of Selma because Sheriff Jim Clark wouldn't let folk register in Selma. We would import people from the rural areas to go to the courthouse to register. But we never could get enough people in Selma involved and so they sent me to Marion, Alabama. That was, I guess, my first time serving as a leader, because when I went to Marion people had to be off the streets at a certain time — Marion, Greensboro, Eutaw, all over those black counties. And we, along with SNCC, went to town and told people, "This is your town, you're a majority here, and you should have the right."

We'd been there about two months and the power structure had attempted to arrest me four or five times, but

people in the community knew it, especially the women who worked in the houses of white women because they had overheard what was gonna happen if I ever got arrested. So one day they arrested me. They took me to jail and was gonna lynch me and people had come to the jail, saying, "We got him finally." But it got to Albert Turner, and he mobilized a mass meeting in the church and a march.

When they came out for the march that night, the police just started beating up folk and shooting, and that's when Jimmy Lee Jackson got shot. His family was known all over that area. That same night, his granddaddy, Brother Kacie, who was about 88, was beat up by the highway patrol. And that went directly over the television because some cameras picked it up, and everybody knew that old man had went and registered to vote. And Jimmy Lee lived from that Thursday he got shot until the next week and he died that following Friday, a week later. We had said we were going to have a motorcade to Montgomery from Selma because of what Jim Clark was doing, but when Jimmy Lee Jackson was shot, Jim Bevel and myself and Mrs. Lucy Foster sorta said, "We don't need to drive — let's walk to Montgomery." That's where the whole walk-to-Montgomery idea came. Because of Jimmy Lee.

The first day we struck out to walk, marching, we got the dog stuff beat out of us out there on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. We retreated and went back to the church, and that's when the national call went out. I guess that was my first experience as far as being a leader, because people in Marion, they started calling me Jesus, and when I go there today, man, they still call me Jesus.

Then they wanted somebody to go to Chicago, and Bevel called me and asked me would I come up to Chicago, and the people in Marion didn't want me to leave. That's when Dr. King started calling me Shackdaddy. He made a speech, saying that we were shacking with the community, we wasn't there to live, we weren't gonna marry the community. Our job was to get stuff started and then move on and get stuff started in other areas. I guess more people know me, man, as Shackdaddy than they do as James Orange.

So I left and went to Chicago in the



Birmingham Fire Department uses high-pressure hoses against peaceful demonstrators.

fall of '65. We had never seen those type of conditions, and the first tenant council was organized by us in '65. We had a rent strike and told people don't pay no more rent to the landlord, pay rent to yourself. We got 10 to 12 thousand dollars taken up in rent. We just took that money, went out and bought some building materials, and put it in each person's apartment and told them to fix their apartment. And the landlord of that building saw the difference in the attitude of the people who lived there because they was interested in helping their own selves. He gave us that building, gave that building to Dr. King and SCLC.

We went from that part in Chicago to saying, "Okay, we don't have a right to live in a certain place," and that's what brought the marches on open housing.

They said they needed someone to organize the gangs and I went out and started talking with some of the kids and went to the South Side. A couple of kids were fighting and I didn't know it was a gang fight. I went over there, say, "Hey man, brothers ain't got no business fighting. Y'all

oughta be trying to fight the system and here y'all fighting each other." And both of em turned on me and I guess what surprised them was I didn't fight back.

I went to the doctor and just had a busted nose, busted lip. The next morning I went back to the area with Jimmy Collier, who was a guitar player, and a white fellow named Eric Kimburg who was on staff. When I got out of the car, about 25 guys started walking towards Eric. I said, "Hey, hold it, man, now wait a minute. I done took that last whipping y'all gave me last night, but we're not gonna keep taking whippings. If y'all want to talk about how do you get out of the slum," I said, "that's what we here for." And Jimmy Collier took out his guitar and started singing. The song he sung was "The Ghetto" — we have that on our record, "Jimmy Collier and Friends," that came out of Chicago.

During the whole Movement, see like, whenever we wanted to get control of people, we started singing freedom songs, that was the best way to get attention and get control. Because whoever was leading that freedom song, at the end of that

freedom song, he had everybody's attention, and that was the way we kept control of people, even on marches. Like if we saw the police coming, the first song we'd strike out with, "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Us Around" — ain't gonna let no police officer turn us around, ain't gonna let no dogs — and that song would go on even if people was being whupped.

So this was the Blackstone Rangers. Then we went over to the Vice Lords, the Roman Saints, the Cobras, and there was a white gang up in Uptown Chicago that Rennie Davis was working with and we got to them, and to the Puerto Rican gangs. We got them together at a gang convention, and Dr. King came to the hotel where we had it. Those guys just sat down and started talking about working together. From that period on, we worked with these guys. We was talking about marching in Gage Park, and I said the best thing to do is get them guys to be marshals. Nobody could see them being nonviolent, but we started having workshops, freedom songs, and taught them the

songs that we did in Birmingham. They started out bad, in so many words, but ended up good. And they said, "Okay, we'll be your marshals."

The first day we went out there, they had shotguns and everything. So we said, "All right, anybody that's too afraid to go with no weapons, we don't want you to go because we don't want no scared people with us." That irritated everybody, because we was telling them that they was chicken. We collected their weapons, weapons we didn't even know they had, four or five boxes full. So all of the Rangers said, "Okay, we're gonna take care of this side."

So I said, "The worst thing that can happen is to let the gang kids get together. Why don't we separate them, put a Ranger, Vice Lord, Roman Saint, Cobra — you know, we just pair them off." That's what we did, and they got to know each other. After the first two or three marches, after they saw who the enemy was, we didn't hear no more on radio or TV about violence with the gangs versus gangs. They tell me that they are just starting back to using that type of violence. Like Chicago was quiet from about '65 maybe up until about '73 or '74, before gangs just really got reorganized, and that was Chicago.

Then Doc asked us to go to Cleveland, so Willie Tabb, Al Simpson and I went and began working on voter registration and pulling the community together. We had an election and we worked out there with Carl Stokes, and I guess that was the first time I'd ever really gotten mad with a Movement leader. The night the election was over, when Carl Stokes won as mayor, the phone rung in Dr. King's room. It was Carl Stokes saying he didn't think Dr. King should come to the victory party because he would polarize the people. And we did all that work, so automatically people just got pissed off with Carl Stokes.

About a week or so later we left and went to Philadelphia, and in Philadelphia we were talking about the Poor People's Campaign. They had given me the Northeast and told me I had to get people from Boston to Washington, DC, and I didn't know what to do! I went to Philadelphia at the end of '67, and I was in Philadelphia up until a week before Dr. King was assassinated.

Doc went to Memphis for a march and they rioted, so that night they

called me in Philadelphia and told me to get the first plane smoking from Philadelphia and come back to Atlanta. At the staff meeting in Atlanta, they said they needed somebody to deal with the Invaders, who were one of the rival gangs in Memphis, and talk to people about nonviolence. So I went over to Memphis that Sunday. The following Thursday, Dr. King was shot, and I left, went back to Philadelphia to work on the Poor People's Campaign.

We had said we were gonna bring one bus from the Northeast to Washington, DC, and by the time we left Boston we had 28 buses. When we left Providence, I think we pulled into New York with 31 buses. We left New York, we had 112 buses and we were supposed to have started with one bus. We marched in Philly with over 50,000 people, just on that day. This is May and June, 1968.

When we got to DC we had too many buses in that Northeast contingent, because the Southern and Midwestern and Western legs had come up, and they halted us in Maryland for about three days. We finally got enough structures completed in Resurrection City that they moved us on in. And when I got off the bus with my folk and was going on back to Philadelphia, that's when I found out I was the sheriff of Resurrection City. Dr. Abernathy, Bevel and Andy made the decision. They gave me an assignment that I thought I didn't know nothing about. How do you have a police department without arresting folk and beating people up? That was when I really got off into nonviolence because, at that point, we had everything at Resurrection City that was in Harlem — prostitution, drugs, people hustling this and that, gangs. We was able without violence to break all of that up in about a week or so.

After the Poor People's Campaign, I went down to Charleston for the hospital workers strike. From Charleston, in 1969, the program that I picked up as my pet program was Operation GAM — Operation Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. That's what I worked on, I guess from '69 up until I started working with the labor movement. In Operation GAM, we attempted to get a congressional district in each of those states that was predominantly black and do some voter registration and politicizing.

Now I also worked on the March Against Repression in '72. We marched

from Miami to Tallahassee, Florida; the Democratic National Convention was down in Florida at the time. When we got to Tallahassee with about 10,000 to 15,000 folks, the highway patrol stopped us on the highway and pushed us off the road and said, "We want y'all off the highway, you ain't gonna walk on the road no more." I said, "All right, we ain't gonna do nothing, we'll just stay here. You go get the governor, and if the governor comes out here and talks to us," I said, "then we'll move, we'll go on further." About 15 to 20 minutes later, here come a helicopter and the governor landed. Reuben Askew.

The main issue that we was raising was the whole question of commodity foods. They'd give Cubans food stamps and give blacks and poor whites commodities — peanut butter, dried beans, cheese that came in a box. And so we got some of the Chicanos and Cubans in Florida and said what we wanted to do was make sure that if y'all can't eat commodities why we gotta eat em. That brought back up that whole national program to end the commodity program, and then the food stamps program came into being. We give ourselves, those of us who was participating, some credit for making food stamps a national thing.

Then I worked on the Continental Walk, marching from New Orleans to Washington during the Bicentennial to focus on the connection between the money spent on the Pentagon that doesn't go to social programs.

After that I got several calls from Andy and Mrs. King and others to work with the J.P. Stevens workers and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. I told them I didn't want to work with labor, because I was with the Civil Rights Movement. But I kept getting the calls for help and so at the beginning of February, 1977, I consented to talk with ACTWU and then I started working with them and that brought me into the labor movement.

It's a funny thing, man. When I got hooked up with the Civil Rights Movement, me and my daddy didn't get along, because he didn't like me being a civil-rights activist. My mother, she was a bootleg beautician — she'd dress hair at home. She had been afraid for what I was doing in the Movement in Birmingham, too. See, my mother's church was bombed at the time, so I understood why she was

scared. But one night I went to a mass meeting, I looked down and saw a lady stand up clapping – and I said, “Damn, don’t that look like my mama.” And I went down, and it *waz* my mama.

Now my daddy, I always thought my daddy was an Uncle Tom, I really did. But when I started working with ACTWU back in ’77, now that’s when my father and I really opened up, because he said, “Okay, you’re doing something that I think you oughta be doing.” It didn’t dawn on me till maybe six months after I had started working with the union that, hey, my daddy got fired for organizing a union, trying to get a union in 1957 in ACIPCO. He had been blacklisted after that.

Every job he’d get, he got terminated from because people found out that he was union. He went to that meeting with a white union man, and back in ’57, you just didn’t sit in no meeting with white folks in Birmingham. Three folk got fired – they told them laid off – a white guy, a white woman and daddy. I guess once I started with the union, that’s when he started respecting my work.

All along, I had been working alongside labor folk. They’re the ones who can make sure a movement has the leaflets, transportation and bond money. People like Ralph Worrell, he’s with District 65, had been trying to get me to be a labor organizer for years, back in the mid-’60s. One thing they showed me was that in the Civil Rights Movement, once we got a community organized, we didn’t have any type of organization, we left a mobilization, but with organized labor you leave an organization that is continuous. In SCLC, we never went and organized no community, we really didn’t. Now we called ourselves organizers, but we really was mobilizers. We could mobilize a community for a shotgun, like for a spur-of-the-moment movement. But now in organized labor your tendency is to set up an organization, and that organization, whether I’m there or not, they know that a certain day each year, they’re gonna have an election. You’ve got a contract to renew, a company to negotiate on an equal footing with, people who you represent day in and day out. In the Civil Rights Movement, we didn’t have that. We got some community organizations that we organized in some communities, but



Bruce Davidson/Magnum

yet still those organizations don’t have the power to go to the power structure and to deal with change.

That was the difference in the Movement. We didn’t develop people and institutions to follow up in communities. Instead what happened was the people who did the most criticizing of the stuff that we were doing was basically the people who ended up getting the benefits. People who were going around saying, “We ain’t got no business going down there registering to vote,” they ended up being elected officials. And they didn’t change things. You got a black power base, you got a white power base, whether you realize it or not. And at some point those two power bases get up and meet, but they don’t ever agree because they ain’t never level. The power structure that *is* the power structure is always a step above the other guy, because he’s the one making the decisions and coming out with issues. So what they do is give us programs to pacify folks. They co-opt people into federal programs. The federal government has taken a lot of your local leaders and given them federal programs, and when you get money from the federal government it’s hard to fight the government.

And that’s the difference with labor. It focuses on economics and independent security. I’ll give you an example of what I mean. We got a civil-rights bill and a voters’ rights bill in ’64 and ’65. But they don’t guarantee people a decent source of living because they don’t secure an economic base for folks. And that’s where organized labor really could take up where the Civil Rights Movement left off, because we just got the bills

The Selma-to-Montgomery March in 1965 drew 50,000 supporters from across the U.S.

but we didn’t get no kind of protection. There is nothing to make sure that if a person had a job he would be guaranteed certain things in his job, guaranteed certain basic rights.

Labor can gain a lot of things from Movement folk, too. Like, if labor would really have gone to the civil-rights organizations when the 1978 Labor Law Reform Bill was up for a vote, they could have really gotten a mass letter campaign going, and they could have even got some demonstrations. Labor is good at pickets, but the Civil Rights Movement is good at demonstrations. The labor movement is good at obedience, but the Civil Rights Movement is good at civil disobedience. They’ve had me working on a couple of marches in the labor movement, and a lot of unions are moving toward those civil-rights ideals.

I still see myself as a mobilizer, but as a mobilizer on a different level. And I’m still called an outside agitator. That was the word the power structure used, and they’re using it now, in organized labor. Some of the same people that I ran up on in the Civil Rights Movement in South Carolina who was fighting the Movement, in Georgia, in Mississippi and Alabama, they’re fighting the labor movement today. Their words, as far as blacks and whites, have changed, but their goals really are still the same. They want to fight change, and that’s all it is.

When I go into the community I’m still looking for people who want change, and if bringing about that change means taking a beating, then that’s what that person would take.



Ralph Abernathy confers with SCLC staffers: Orange, Lester Courtney and Lester Hankins.

Nobody in the Movement wanted to take a beating, but if taking a beating meant giving me the right to sit in whatever restaurant I wanted to sit in, boom, I was there to take that beating. If taking a beating or getting killed meant getting the right to vote, we was there to do that. Same thing as far as open housing, or whatever the issues confronting us were at that time, and still are in organized labor.

I feel very strongly that in a lot of areas labor could really take up in the South where civil rights left off. But it's gonna have to be some real progressive thinking as far as the whole concept of black versus white, because you got a lot of blacks working in the South, and I think once we could show them, "Hey, that ain't just a white union, blacks are there too," then a lot of stuff can happen.

In a lot of areas poor whites are just as bad as blacks as far as the power structure is concerned. They might not do the same things, but they have the same lifestyle. Friday night, Saturday night is when they party, Sunday they go ask for blessings. You gotta teach them how to get blessings all week long. And those blessings go to everybody in the community. You find a worker that's not organized, it's a worker that's always bitching about something, either his home, his church, his school, his job, his surroundings, his community, he's the

worker who's bitching. But the average worker that's organized, he's out doing something in his community. That's why I see something that could happen with labor, really, with labor and civil rights. On a national level, and in every community.

I guess I go in with an advantage because I know people on all sides, on the labor side, civil-rights side, the church side, economic side, political side. And I can interpret the different sides to one another. But still civil-rights organizations don't trust labor. And so they gotta start trusting people and work for labor to make sure that neither side makes the bad mistakes they have been making. There have to be coalitions. I could be a labor member and I could be a racist in my heart, but that shouldn't stop me from working with churches and civil-rights organizations. Why? Because if I come out here and work to help economic development in my community through a grievance procedure or whatever the case may be, that's not just helping me in my local. That's helping the community that the brother lives in. And people gotta make that hook-up and that connection.

You could do a lot in a community with a labor union like a civil-rights organization once did, and more. A local could be the political mechanism

in that community. The A. Philip Randolph Institute can come in and do voter registration along with the Voter Education Project. A local can conduct a citizenship training program to teach the people how to read and write. Whether we realize it or not, 40 percent of the Southeast is still illiterate — can't read, can't write. So organized labor could serve as that mechanism to teach reading and writing programs in and around locals. This isn't something that you expect to happen overnight, but with the right type of challenge to society, this could happen.

Our union in New York has a druggist program where the person in that area knows if they need some type of medicine, they can get the medicine from our office at a discount rate. But suppose every local was like that? We can run a savings plan, call it credit unions, in Rome, Georgia, where we have a rubber plant unionized, and the members of that local can go and get tires at a discount for their families and friends. There could be a hook-up between the AFL-CIO and any of their affiliated members so they can go up, flash a card, say, "Okay, I need a set of Uniroyals," and then you could get it at the union rate, you're a union member. These are the kind of things that could happen with union members that couldn't necessarily happen because you don't have the mechanism anywhere else that is as strong and as powerful as organized labor. And these are things people need.

The thing civil-rights organizations, church organizations, labor organizations — all of us — have to do is get involved in the whole concept of organizing. Too often we think our ideas are too big, or if we try something, it might get out of hand. But when we start organizing, we find out that it was us who was too cautious, and the people knew what was on their minds. We don't have the type of leaders today that we had back in the early '60s and late '50s, because if a person pulled you out as a leader that meant that that community and those folk was behind you, and you stayed up with them. In a lot of instances today, the people have gone off and left the leader as far as their mentality and ideas is concerned. Gandhi had it right; he said, "There go my people. I must catch up with them, for I am their leader." □

W.E.B. DUBOIS BEHOLD THE LAND

W.E.B. DuBois delivered the following speech in Columbia, South Carolina, on October 20, 1946, at the closing session of the Southern Youth Legislature, one of the many projects of the Southern Negro Youth Congress (SNYC). Nearly 1,000 young people responded to the SNYC call "to plan further strategy for the vote and demonstrate in a dramatic way the will of our youth to gain possession of the ballot and to wield this weapon of democracy with skill and courage." At the closing session, the young delegates called for Congress to establish a Fair Employment Practices Commission, adequate and equal housing and an end to all forms of "white supremacy, customs and practices."

*There are striking similarities between the work and development of the Southern Negro Youth Congress founded in 1937 and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee founded in 1960. Both engaged in militant struggles to win Afro-Americans' voting rights; both organized and lobbied for the enactment of federal legislation and structures to enforce non-discrimination in hiring; both groups waged battles for the restoration of democratic rights for Afro-Americans; and both groups led campaigns against violence directed towards blacks. Some of their tactics were similar: for example, SNYC's 1940 New Orleans voter registration campaign was highlighted by a mock election; in 1963, SNCC helped organize the Freedom election in Mississippi which preceded the formation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Other aspects of their work differed markedly: unlike the later SNCC, the earlier SNYC focused much of its attention on labor struggles, helping organize tobacco workers in Richmond and steel workers in Birmingham. (For a discussion of the Southern Negro Youth Congress, see *Freedomways*, Vol. IV, Number 1, page 35, and Johnetta Richards, "The Image and Accomplishments of the Southern Negro Youth Congress," delivered to the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History.)*

A couple of comments about the Columbia conference: some of the events were held at the city's municipal auditorium, a first for an Afro-American organization, and an event much discussed by the area's press. At the closing session of the Southern Youth Legislature, the young delegates — Afro-American and white — crowded into Antisdel Chapel of Benedict College. They were joined by a large and sympathetic public who stood in the aisles, jammed the doors and listened to DuBois through loudspeakers outside the auditorium.

The future of American Negroes is in the South. Here 327 years ago, they began to enter what is now the United States of America; here they have made their greatest contribution to American culture; and here they have suffered the damnation of slavery, the frustration of reconstruction and the lynching of emancipation. I trust then that an organization like yours is going to regard the South as the battleground of a great crusade. Here is the magnificent climate; here is the fruitful earth under the beauty of the Southern sun; and here, if anywhere on earth, is the need of the thinker, the worker and the dreamer. This is the firing line not simply for the emancipation of the American Negro but for the emancipation of the African Negro and the Negroes of the West Indies; for the emancipation of the colored races; and for the emancipation of the white slaves of modern capitalistic monopoly.

Remember here, too, that you do not stand alone. It may seem like a failing fight when the newspapers ignore you; when every effort is made by white people in the South to count you out of citizenship and to act as though you did not exist as human beings while all the time they are profiting by your labor; gleaned wealth from your sacrifices and trying to build a nation and a civilization upon your degradation. You must remember that despite all this, you have allies and allies even in the white South. First and greatest of these possible allies are the white working classes about you. The poor whites whom you have been taught to despise and who in turn have learned to fear and hate you. This must not deter you from efforts to make them understand, because in the past in their ignorance and suffering they have been led foolishly to look upon you as the cause of most of their distress. You must remember that this attitude is hereditary from slavery and that it has been deliberately cultivated ever since emancipation.

Slowly but surely the working people of the South, white and black, must come to remember that their emancipation depends upon their mutual cooperation; upon their acquaintanceship with each other; upon their friendship; upon their social intermingling. Unless this happens each is going to be made the football to break the heads and hearts of the other.

White youth in the South is peculiarly frustrated. There is not a single great ideal which they can express or aspire to that does not bring them into flat contradiction with the Negro problem. The more they try to escape it, the more



UPI Photo

Three hundred men and women begin the last half of the now famous Freedom March from Selma to Montgomery, March, 1965.

they land in hypocrisy, lying and double-dealing; the more they become what they least wish to become, the oppressors and despisers of human beings. Some of them, in larger and larger numbers, are bound to turn toward the truth and to recognize you as brothers and sisters, as fellow travelers toward the dawn.

If now you young people, instead of running away from the battle here in Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi, instead of seeking freedom and opportunity in Chicago and New York – which do spell opportunity – nevertheless grit your teeth and make up your minds to fight it out right here if it takes every day of your lives and the lives of your children's children; if you do this, you must in meetings like this ask yourselves what does the fight mean? How can it be carried on? What are the best tools, arms and methods? And where does it lead?

I should be the last to insist that the uplift of mankind never calls for force and death. There are times, as both you and I know, when

*Tho' love repine and reason chafe,
There came a voice without reply,
'Tis man's perdition to be safe
When for truth he ought to die.*

At the same time and even more clearly in a day like this, after the millions of mass murders that have been done in the world since 1914, we ought to be the last to believe that force is ever the final word. We cannot escape the clear fact that what is going to win in this world is reason if this ever becomes a reasonable world. The careful reasoning of the human mind backed by the facts of science is the one salvation of man. The world, if it resumes its march toward civilization, cannot ignore reason. This has been the tragedy of the South in the past; it is still its awful and unforgivable sin that it has set its face against reason and against the fact. It tried to build slavery upon freedom; it tried to build tyranny upon democracy; it tried to build mob violence on law and law on lynching.

Nevertheless, reason can and will prevail; but of course it can only prevail with publicity – pitiless, blatant publicity. You have got to make the people of the United States and of the world know what is going on in the South. You have got to use every field of publicity to

force the truth into their ears, and before their eyes. You have got to make it impossible for any human being to live in the South and not realize the barbarities that prevail here. You may be condemned for flamboyant methods; for calling a congress like this; for waving your grievances under the noses and in the faces of men. That makes no difference; it is your duty to do it.

There are enormous opportunities here for a new nation, a new economy, a new culture in a South really new and not a mere renewal of an Old South of slavery, monopoly and race hate. There is a chance for a new cooperative agriculture on renewed land owned by the state with capital furnished by the state, mechanized and coordinated with city life. There is a chance for strong, virile trade unions without race discrimination, with high wages, closed shops and decent conditions of work, to beat back and hold in check the swarm of landlords, monopolists and profiteers who are today sucking the blood out of this land.

There is a vast field for consumer cooperation, building business on public service and not on private profit as the mainspring of industry. There is chance for a broad, sunny, healthy home life, shorn of the fear of mobs and liquor, and rescued from lying, stealing politicians, who build their devilry on race prejudice.

Here in this South is the gateway to the colored millions of the West Indies, Central and South America. Here is the straight path to the greater, freer, truer world. It would be shame and cowardice to surrender this glorious land and its opportunities for civilization and humanity to the thugs and lynchers, the mobs and profiteers, the monopolists and gamblers who today choke its soul and steal its resources. The oil and sulphur; the coal and iron; the cotton and corn; the lumber and cattle belong to you the workers, black and white, and not to the thieves who hold them and use them to enslave you. They can be rescued and restored to the people if you have the guts to strive for the real right to vote, the right to real education, the right to happiness and health and the total abolition of the father of these scourges of mankind – *poverty*.

“Behold the beautiful land which the Lord thy God hath given thee.” Behold the land, the rich and resourceful land, from which for 100 years its best elements have been running away, its youth and hope, black and white, scurrying north because they are afraid of each other, and dare not face a future of equal, independent, upstanding human beings, in a real and not a sham democracy.

To rescue this land, in this way, calls for the *Great Sacrifice*; this is the thing you are called upon to do because it is the right thing to do. Because you are embarked upon a great and holy crusade, the emancipation of mankind, black and white; the upbuilding of democracy; the breaking down, particularly here in the South, of forces of evil represented by race prejudice in South Carolina; by lynching in Georgia; by disfranchisement in Mississippi; by ignorance in Louisiana; and by all these and monopoly of wealth in the whole South.

There could be no more splendid vocation beckoning to the youth of the twentieth century, after the flat failures of white civilization, after the flamboyant establishment of an industrial system which creates poverty and the children of poverty, which are ignorance and disease and crime; after the crazy boasting of a white culture that finally ended in wars which ruined civilization in the whole world; in the midst of allied people who have yelled about democracy and never practiced it either in the British Empire or in the American Commonwealth or in South Carolina.

Here is the chance for young men and women of devotion to lift again the banner of humanity and to walk toward a civilization which will be free and intelligent; which will be healthy and unafraid; and build in the world a culture led by black folk and joined by peoples of all colors and races — without poverty, ignorance and disease!

UPI Photo

Once a great German poet cried: “*Selig der den Er in Sieges Glanze findet*” — “Happy man whom Death shall find in Victory’s splendor.”

But I know a happier one: he who fights in despair and in defeat still fights. Singing with Arna Bontemps the quiet, determined philosophy of undefeatable men:

*I thought I saw an angel flying low,
I thought I saw the flicker of a wing
Above the mulberry trees; but not again,
Bethesda sleeps. This ancient pool that healed
A Host of bearded Jews does not awake.
This pool that once the angels troubled does not move.
No angel stirs it now, no Saviour comes
With healing in His hands to raise the sick
And bid the lame men leap upon the ground.
The golden days are gone. Why do we wait
So long upon the marble steps, blood
Falling from our open wounds? and why
Do our black faces search the empty sky?
Is there something we have forgotten? Some precious
thing
We have lost, wandering in strange lands?*

*There was a day, I remember now,
I beat my breast and cried, “Wash me God,”
Wash me with a wave of wind upon
The barley; O quiet one, draw near, draw near!
Walk upon the hills with lovely feet
And in the waterfall stand and speak! □*

South Africa, 1970: If caught, this man faces a fine of \$20 or 20 days in jail for merely sitting on a “Europeans Only” bench.



**BARBARA TAYLOR,
CLIFF KUHN AND MARC MILLER**

RESEARCH REPORT AFTER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

The Afro-American struggle since the Montgomery Bus Boycott — indeed since the first slave revolt in America in 1526 — has encompassed three broad areas: the social, the political and the economic. During the first 10 years of the modern struggle, the Movement focused on the most glaring and insulting manifestation of racism: legal segregation. But throughout the history of the Freedom Movement, the drive for economic justice has been a basic theme, one that demands primary attention now that *de jure* segregation has ended. Those who say, like W.E.B. DuBois, that true freedom goes beyond segregated buses, that social and economic justice are inseparable, have been proved correct.

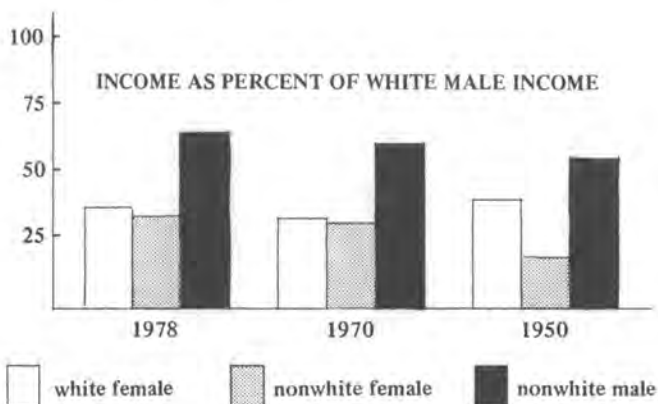
Looking back at the two-and-a-half decades since the Montgomery Bus Boycott, we can evaluate the progress of the Freedom Movement in two ways. On the one hand, segregation by law is now illegal and ended, and lies in total disrepute. Blacks and whites have, under protection of law, equal rights of access to any seat on a bus, to eat in a restaurant, to buy a home, go to school or get a job. On the other hand, such progress clarifies the depths to which this is a white-dominated America; segregation may not be in force legally, but it still exists. What the Movement has yet to achieve can most clearly be measured in economic terms, because its ability to overcome racism does not rest in abolishing blatant legal codes, but in overthrowing the “law” of unequal life for black people. In terms of equalizing income, ownership of homes and businesses and the rates of unemployment, poverty and infant mortality, after 25 years the Movement still has a long way to go. It must always be remembered that progress did result from Movement activism, especially during the 1960s, but since 1970, and especially since 1975, the small gains won while blacks (and whites) struggled most consistently for freedom have been fast disappearing.

INCOME

In the job market, two groups of Americans lose out: blacks and women. Although both groups have made progress in the last 30 years, neither group has been able to

significantly close the gap between their income and that of white males.

In 1950, blacks males earned an average income of about half that of white males. Women — white and black — fared even worse, with white women earning two-fifths and black women receiving one-sixth of a white male’s income. Ten years later, black men still earned about half what white men earned, white females had *lost* ground to 31 percent, and black women climbed slightly to 19 percent of what white men earned that year. The ’60s brought a significant gain for black men and women — and a decline in the status of white women — but these gains slowed to an almost imperceptible crawl after 1970.



A major reason for the low income black and women workers receive is the difficulty of finding full-time jobs which last throughout an entire year. In fact, considering only year-round, full-time workers, black men earned 79 percent of what white men earned in 1978, up from the 64 percent figure for all black male workers; meanwhile, year-round, full-time black female workers made 56 percent of the white male’s income compared to the 33 percent figure for all black female workers. Between 1960 and 1978, the proportion of black and women workers who found full-time, year-round work did not change significantly, especially in relation to the increases among full-time white workers.

MEDIAN INDIVIDUAL INCOME, ALL U.S. WORKERS

	White Males Annual \$ Income	Nonwhite Male as % White Male	White Female as % White Male	Nonwhite Female as % White Male
1978	\$11,453	64%	36%	33%
1974	9,794	63	35	32
1970	7,011	60	32	30
1960	4,296	53	31	19
1950	2,709	54	39	17

MEDIAN INDIVIDUAL INCOME, FULL-TIME, YEAR-ROUND WORKERS

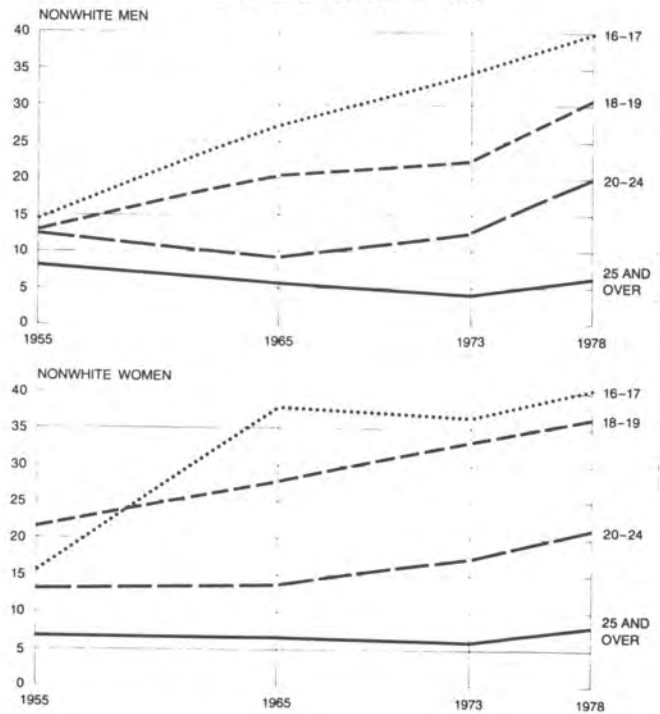
	White Males Annual \$ Income	Nonwhite Male as % White Male	White Female as % White Male	Nonwhite Female as % White Male
1978	\$16,360	79%	59%	56%
1974	12,434	73	56	53
1970	9,447	70	59	49
1960	4,472	66	61	41

UNEMPLOYMENT

The other side of the plug nickel earned from lack of full-time, reliable work is high unemployment. Here the racism of the job market is even more dramatic. Between 1960 and 1980, unemployment rates for black men and women have remained roughly twice as high as the rates for white men and women. The only significant gains came in the 1960s for black men, but this gain disappeared in the '70s. In Southern states, the picture is even bleaker, with black unemployment rates often three times white rates.

The most frightening statistic in this report is the unem-

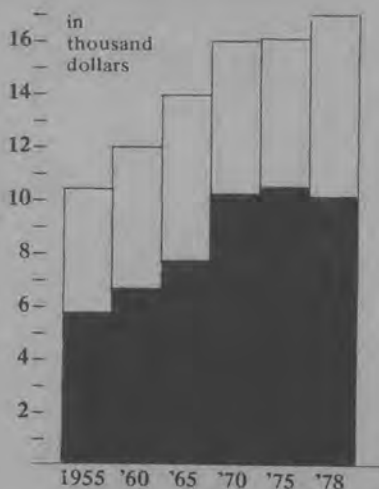
UNEMPLOYMENT BY AGE



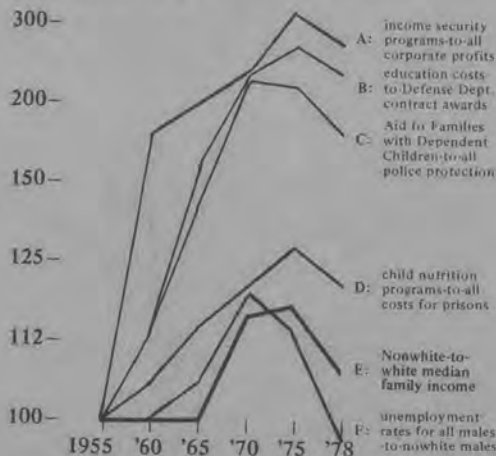
Source: Scientific American magazine

employment rate for black teenagers. Consistently higher than overall unemployment, the rate for black teenagers hit a record high of 45.5 percent in mid-1977. It fell slightly thereafter, but rose again to close at 37.2 percent for the last quarter of 1980.

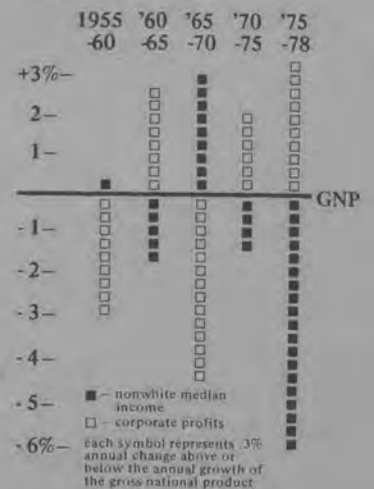
WHITE & NONWHITE MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME (in 1977 constant dollars)



RISE AND FALL OF THE RATIO OF NONWHITE-TO-WHITE MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME COMPARED TO CHANGES IN RATIOS OF SOCIAL PRIORITIES (each ratio indexed to its 1955 base at 100)

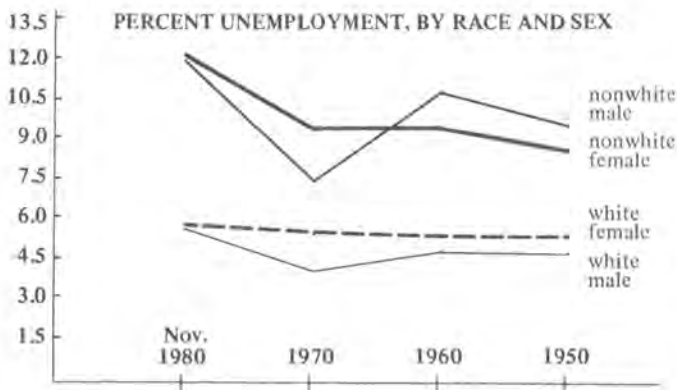


COMPARISON OF GROWTH OR DECLINE OF NONWHITE INCOME AND CORPORATE PROFITS WITH GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT



THE MOST DIRECT MEASUREMENT of the economic progress of black and other minority families over the last 25 years is how well the average family's income has improved compared to the average white family's. Chart 1 shows that median income (expressed in constant 1977 dollars to adjust for inflation) has dramatically improved for nonwhite families, especially from 1965 to 1975 when it climbed at a faster rate than for white families. The positive redistribution of income through taxes, affirmative action, and the massive social programs arising from the Freedom Movement began reversing after the 1974-75 recession. Chart 2 reveals how the rise and fall in the ratio of nonwhite-to-white family incomes directly corresponds to changes in the priorities of government spending for progressive vs. repressive programs. Line A—the ratio of all income security programs-to-corporate profits after taxes with capital consumption allowances; the 1955 ratio of .21 is set at 100 and the line going up the scale indicates an improving relation, with income security programs

increasing faster than corporate profits — until 1975. The 1955 ratios for other lines are B=.67, C=.46, D=.52, E=.55 and F=.51. The Reagan Administration's priorities of more missiles and fewer food stamps will escalate the regressive trend for each ratio. In the massive reshifting of resources, the real gains have gone into corporate profits. Chart 3 shows that throughout the last 25 years, nonwhite family income has improved faster than the rate of growth of the overall gross national product (GNP) only in periods when corporate profits (after taxes with capital accumulation allowances) have lagged behind the GNP's gains. The increases in the real income for nonwhites comes less from the pockets of whites than from the conditions that spread the income of productive labor more equitably throughout society, including higher employment, higher wage-to-profit rate, and higher corporate taxes. Without such conditions, the growth of nonwhite and white income will decline as resources are diverted into profits and anti-social programs such as the military, police and prisons.



Low income and high unemployment go hand in hand with the repressive nature of the American prison system. The high incarceration rate for blacks – typically 50 to 60 percent of the inmates in Southern prisons are black – results directly from economic conditions. Estimates are that a one percent rise in the unemployment rate will soon be matched by a four percent rise in prison admissions. Surveys of the inmates in state prisons bear out the connection between unemployment and income and crime. In 1974, the most recent year for which comprehensive figures are available, half the prisoners in the U.S. were black; half had no high school diploma; only 61 percent had a full-time job the month before being arrested; and 42 percent earned under \$4,000 in the year before being arrested.

BLACK BUSINESS

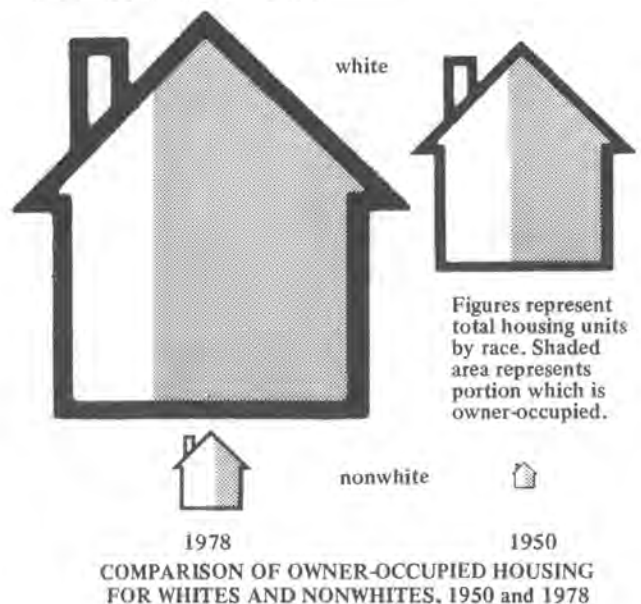
One of the cornerstones of the Republican “plan” for black economic advancement has been the promise of black capitalism. And, in fact, during the Nixon years, black businesses as a whole did seem to grow faster than the national economy as a whole: they increased their gross revenues by 60 percent between 1969 and 1972, while the U.S. Gross Domestic Product only rose 25 percent. But black businesses have always been marginal businesses: that is, they are almost all small operations, with few or no employees beyond the immediate family, and therefore always extremely vulnerable to downturns in the economy. Since 1972, the year comprehensive figures were first collected, four-fifths of black businesses have been too small to provide employment to anyone besides the owners. In 1977, the average gross receipts of a black business were only \$32,775 in the South and \$37,392 in the nation, suggesting a profit for independent business owners of less than \$10,000 per year. As a cornerstone for economic development, such businesses provide slimmer hope than finding a job in a white-owned factory, especially a union job. And with the recession of the mid-’70s, black businesses lost their momentum, growing even slower than the U.S. economy as a whole. Between 1972 and 1977, black business gross receipts increased by 56 percent while the Gross Domestic Product rose 64 percent.

State	Number of Firms	Gross Receipts in \$1,000s	Number of Employees	Receipts Per Firm	% Gain Over 1972
AL	5,330	\$176,702	3,845	\$33,152	35%
AR	2,687	71,796	1,330	26,719	54
FL	10,335	372,934	7,562	36,084	17
GA	9,728	372,447	7,533	38,286	19
KY	2,404	84,365	1,924	35,093	31
LA	9,159	309,092	6,029	33,747	27
MS	4,872	164,848	2,767	33,835	33
NC	10,477	330,369	7,232	31,532	8
SC	7,367	200,349	3,725	27,195	20
TN	5,546	274,172	6,357	49,435	40
TX	17,952	516,020	9,611	28,744	21
VA	10,301	282,796	6,366	27,453	21
WV	606	15,591	249	25,727	41
South	96,764	\$3,171,481	64,530	\$32,775	23
U.S.	231,203	8,645,200	164,177	37,392	27

Source: *Census of Minority-Owned Business: Black, 1977.*

HOUSING

A traditional measure of an American family’s success in entering mainstream economic life is its ownership of a home. Since 1950, the percentage of blacks who own their own homes has been steadily on the rise. However, the rate of the rise is slowing, and has always been slower than that for whites. The difference is most dramatic in the South in the most recent period, between 1970 and 1978. Here, the percentage of blacks owning the homes they live in edged up from 47 percent to 49 percent, but for whites the figures improved from 65 to 71 percent. Thus in 1978, despite affirmative action, open housing laws and the ending of *de jure* segregation, fewer than half of black homes are owner-occupied, while over two-thirds of white homes are owner-occupied.



OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING, BY RACE				
	Total Number Housing Units	% Owner- Occupied	Total Number Housing Units	% Owner- Occup'd
1978				
Total U.S.	67,595,000	68%	8,180,000	44%
Census South	20,705,000	71	4,189,000	49
1970				
Total U.S.	56,606,000	65%	6,175,000	42%
Census South	16,953,000	65	3,110,000	47
1960				
Total U.S.	51,880,000	62%	5,144,000	38%
Census South	12,747,000	62	2,756,000	42
1950				
Total U.S.	39,044,000	57%	3,783,000	35%
Census South	10,165,000	58	2,467,000	37

Source: *Annual Housing Survey, 1978; Census of Housing, 1960 and 1950*. Figures for '60 and '50 are for nonwhite housing. The Census South is the Old Confederacy and MD, DE, DC, WV, KY, OK.

POVERTY

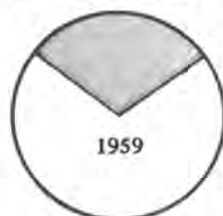
While social programs – including the much-talked-about War on Poverty – have helped lessen poverty levels for all Americans, minorities' escape from poverty has continually lagged behind progress for whites. By 1977, nonwhites comprised 34 percent of the people below the poverty line compared to 28 percent in 1959.

Even more startling, as the number of white Americans living in poverty continues to decline, the number of minority Americans living in poverty actually *increased* between 1969 and 1977, altering the dramatic improvement that occurred during the activist '60s.

Perhaps because they are so offensive to common decency, the Census Bureau has for decades carefully reported infant deaths. Here, the effects of poverty on black people – and on Southerners in general – are most evident. Across the U.S. infant mortality rates for blacks and other minorities have continually surpassed 150 percent of white rates. In 1977, the infant mortality rate for minorities in the U.S. was 21.7 per 1,000 live births compared to 12.3 for whites.

MILLIONS OF AMERICANS LIVING BELOW POVERTY

Total - 39.5 million Total - 24.1 million Total - 24.7 million



28% nonwhite



31% nonwhite



34% nonwhite

BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT

Perhaps the best measure of the commitment of state governments to equal opportunity is how well it cleans up

its own house: that is, the success of affirmative action programs in getting jobs for traditionally oppressed people within state governments. A study of occupational distribution and income in state government in 1975 reveals the lack of help minorities can expect from their local government. Moreover, data compiled by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission points to the increasing need for federal action to increase economic justice.

In one very important respect – income – Southern states seem to do better than private industry in eliminating pay differences between blacks and whites. In 1975, the comparison of black income with white income showed a smaller gap than for the entire economy. But the closest figure – black males in West Virginia compared to white males in West Virginia – showed the former still earning only 90 percent as much as the latter. In the worst case, black women employed by the state of North Carolina earned only 53 percent of what white males did.

The real test of state commitment to affirmative action is in new hiring. Comparing new black workers in state jobs to newly hired workers in private industry shows state affirmative action plans are only a minimal improvement over existing standards outside government. In every Southern state, the overwhelming number of new black government employees were hired for service jobs, the lowest occupational level. Meanwhile, blacks received administrative jobs in state government at a rate far lower than their proportion of each state's population. The simple truth is affirmative action and all other government programs have yet to allow blacks the income and job distribution equal to their proportion of the total population represented by that government.

To help evaluate the nature and extent of state commitments to affirmative action since 1975, letters were sent out to over 100 state agencies asking for statistical and programmatic information, and for statements of policy concerning minority economic development. *Hardly any agencies connected with banking, commerce, insurance or savings and loans reported any special information on minority economic development.* Typical of the responses from these agencies was the reply of the assistant commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Banking and Consumer Finance, who said, "There is no available data concerning the information you request nor are there formal policies concerning this department's goals with regard to minority economic development."

Even in state agencies involved in affirmative action enforcement, minorities are still under-represented. For example, in August, 1979, only 12 percent of the Texas Employment Commission staff was black, and only 15 percent of the Mississippi Employment Security Commission staff was black during fiscal year 1978. The monitoring, recruiting and enforcement procedures of affirmative action programs in Southern states vary widely. Similarly, some states have produced special studies on minority development, while others claim they do not compile economic data by race. Particularly exemplary is the series of special reports published by the Kentucky Human Rights Commission on such topics as black employment, black college graduates and school and housing desegregation.

VOTING

One of the primary objectives of the Freedom Movement was gaining the right to vote, and then to use that vote. The most dramatic increases in black voting strength in the South occurred during the height of general Movement activism, the early '60s. By 1976, the percentage of blacks who were registered and who voted in the South nearly equaled the percentages for whites. As of 1976, 63 percent of blacks of voting age in 11 Southern states registered, compared to 68 percent of whites in 1976 and to only 29 percent of blacks in 1960. But by 1980, the rate of increased registration among blacks had leveled off and actually declined in a few states.

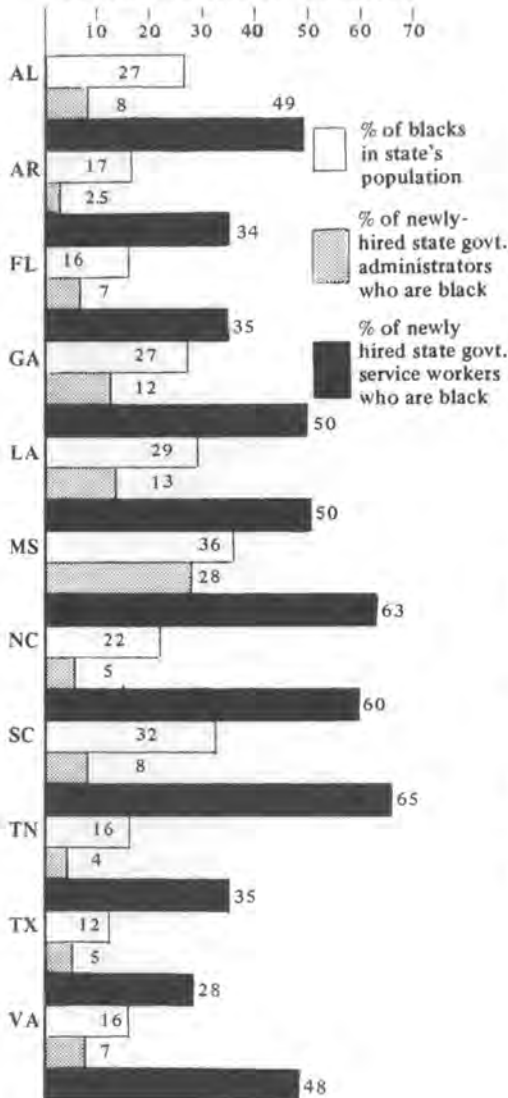
These new black voters have placed into office not only candidates sympathetic to their needs, but an increasing number of black elected officials. 4,912 across the U.S. in 1980, three times the number in 1970. About one-fourth are on local school boards, and another half serve at the

municipal level in mostly small- and medium-sized towns. The total number constitutes less than one percent of all elected officials in the U.S., although 12 percent of the nation's population is black.

As is the case with white voters, blacks have been turning away from the electoral process in recent years. Across the U.S., a smaller percentage of blacks voted in 1972 than voted in 1968, and a smaller percentage voted in 1976 than did so in 1972. In 1980, an estimated 11 to 12 million blacks were registered to vote across the U.S.; yet only 60 percent of those registered voted in the 1980 elections. □

Barbara Taylor, a staff member of the Southern Coalition on Jails and Prisons, and Cliff Kuhn, a graduate student in history, did the research for this article under a grant from the Southern Economic Development Intern Program. Marc Miller is on the Institute for Southern Studies staff. Thanks to the Voter Education Project and the Joint Center for Political Studies for assistance with voting data.

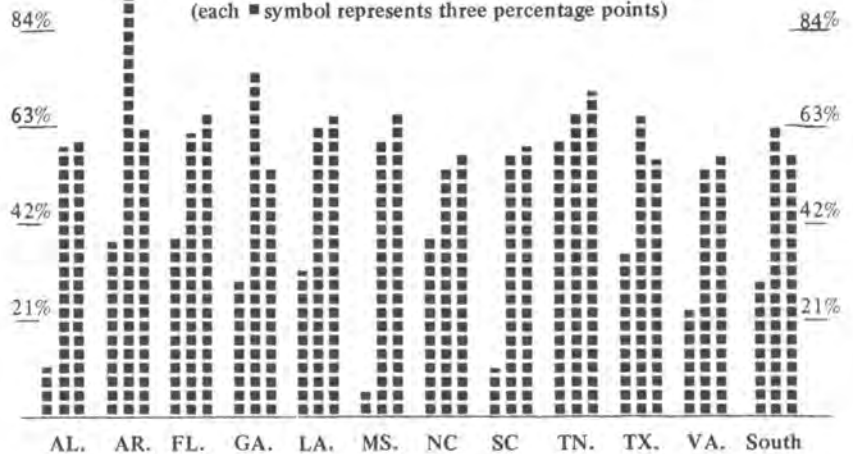
EMPLOYMENT RATE OF BLACKS IN SELECTED NEW STATE JOBS COMPARED TO PROPORTION OF BLACKS IN STATE'S POPULATION



PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS WHO ARE REGISTERED TO VOTE, BY RACE, IN SELECTED YEARS

State	1960		1976		1980		NUMBER OF BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS	
	white	black	white	black	white	black	1969	1980
AL	63.6	13.7	79.3	58.4	81.2	60.8	83	239
AR	60.9	38.0	62.6	94.0	78.5	62.2	54	227
FL	69.3	39.4	61.3	61.1	71.2	66.4	35	109
GA	56.8	29.3	65.9	74.8	65.2	54.2	42	249
LA	76.9	31.1	78.4	63.0	76.7	64.9	54	363
MS	63.9	5.2	80.0	60.7	100*	66.8	78	387
NC	92.1	39.1	69.2	54.8	71.0	57.7	58	247
SC	57.1	13.7	58.4	56.5	61.2	58.5	34	238
TN	73.0	59.1	73.7	66.4	79.9	70.4	30	112
TX	42.5	35.5	69.1	65.0	70.7	55.6	22	196
VA	46.1	23.1	61.6	54.7	61.6	56.4	28	91
South	61.1	29.1	67.9	63.1	72.2	57.7	528	2,458

PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE BLACK VOTERS WHO REGISTERED TO VOTE IN 1960, 1976 & 1980
(each ■ symbol represents three percentage points)



Source: Data as collected from government sources and field estimates by the Voter Education Project; "white" includes Spanish-speaking and other non-black minorities.
* Records from the Miss. Election Commission show more whites are registered than the number given by the U.S. Census of whites who are 18 years old and older.

CAROLYN WATERS

FREEDOM CHRONOLOGY

1619: Colonial governor of Jamestown, Va., purchased 20 blacks, commencing the slave trade in North America.

1663: First major slave rebellion in colonial America took place in Gloucester, Va.

1664: Maryland passed a law preventing marriages between English women and blacks; several colonies soon followed suit.

1672: The king of England chartered the Royal African Company which came to dominate the world slave trade.

1704: A school for blacks, one of the first in the colonies to enroll slaves, was opened by Elias Nau in New York City.

1712: Early slave revolt in New York City resulted in the hanging of 18 blacks.

1772: Lord Mansfield handed down his decision in the *Somerset* case against the existence of slavery on English soil. This case stimulated requests for legislative action against slavery in New England.

1775: Continental Congress passed a resolution barring blacks from the American Revolutionary Army. The royal governor of Virginia offered freedom to all male slaves who joined the British forces. Alarmed by the response, General George Washington ordered recruitment officers to accept free blacks.

1777: Vermont became the first state to abolish slavery.

1787: Richard Allen and Absalom Jones organized the Free African Society, a black self-help group in Philadelphia which became an "African church" affiliated with the Protestant Episcopal church.

1793: Congress passed the first fugitive slave act, making it a crime to harbor an escaped slave or to interfere with his or her arrest.

1800: Gabriel Prosser, a Virginia slave, was betrayed in his plot to lead thousands of slaves in an attack on Richmond. Dozens of slaves were imprisoned or hanged on the spot, and Prosser was publicly hanged.

1808: Federal law barring African slave trade went into effect.

1816: The American Colonization Society was organized under John C. Calhoun and Henry Clay to transport free blacks to Africa. Free blacks protested the efforts to "exile us from the land of our nativity."

1820: Missouri Compromise enacted, prohibiting slavery north of Missouri.

1827: *Freedom's Journal*, the first black newspaper, was published in New York by John Russworm and Samuel Cornish.

1829: *David Walker's Appeal*, a militant anti-slavery pamphlet distributed throughout the country, aroused blacks and was banned in most Southern states.

1831: Nat Turner led the greatest slave rebellion in the U.S. in Virginia; the whole South panicked and more than 160 whites and blacks were killed. Turner was hanged.

1833: Frederick Douglass, later to become a prominent black abolitionist, escaped from his master and fled to New York.

1834: Black preachers began to be outlawed in many Southern states, and slaves were required to attend the church of their masters.

1836: Congress introduced the infamous "gag rule" – anti-slavery petitions should not be read, printed, committed or in any way acted upon by the House, but be laid upon the table without debate or discussion.

1838: A "formal organization" of workers of the Underground Railroad was set up in Philadelphia under the presidency of Robert Purvis, a wealthy black.

1839: The Liberty Party, first antislavery political party, organized in Philadelphia.

1841: A revolt occurred on the slave trader "Creole." Slaves sailed to the Bahamas, where they were given asylum and freedom.

1850: Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Law as part of the Compromise of 1850.

1857: The Dred Scott decision by U.S. Supreme Court opened federal territory to slavery and denied citizenship to blacks.

1859: John Brown raided the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Va., to seize arms with which to free the slaves. He and two other surviving participants were hanged.

1860: Abraham Lincoln elected president. South Carolina later seceded from the Union. Loyal black volunteers were not accepted when the first call for troops was made.

1863: Emancipation Proclamation signed on January 1.

1864: First public school system for blacks opened in the District of Columbia.

1865: Congress established the Freedman's Bureau to help newly emancipated slaves. Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment which, on ratification, abolished slavery.

All-white legislatures began enacting Black Codes to restrict the rights and freedom of movement of blacks.

Fisk University, later one of the most prestigious black colleges in the nation, opened in Nashville. More black colleges were opened to educate the newly freed slaves.

The Ku Klux Klan began in Tennessee.

1867: William Still led a successful campaign against segregated streetcars in Philadelphia.

Congress enacted a law giving suffrage to blacks in the District of Columbia.

1868: Oscar Dunn, an ex-slave, became lieutenant governor of Louisiana, the highest elective office then held by a black American.

1869: At the fourth annual conference of the National Labor Union, it was decided that blacks should form their own unions.

1870: Fifteenth Amendment, giving black males the right to vote, was enacted.

1875: A civil-rights bill was passed by Congress which prohibited discrimination in places of public accommodation.

1877: Rutherford B. Hayes' representatives made a deal with Southern delegates to remove federal troops and leave states alone in return for support from Democratic Southern congressmen when the House voted for president. This deal turned Reconstruction over to white planters, a setback for blacks and poor whites.

1881: Tennessee enacted the first Jim Crow law segregating railroad coaches.

Booker T. Washington opened Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. It became the leading Afro-American agricultural-industrial school.

1883: The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Civil Rights Act of 1875 was unconstitutional.

1890: A constitutional convention in Mississippi adopted the literacy and "understanding" tests as devices to disfranchise blacks.

The Colored Farmers' Alliance, a socio-economic-political organization dedicated to improving the lot of the black farmer, reached a membership of one million.

1895: W.E.B. Du Bois became the first black to receive a doctorate degree from Harvard.

1896: The Supreme Court, in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, upheld the "separate but equal" doctrine.

1900: Booker T. Washington organized the National Negro Business League. In 1903, *The Souls of Black Folk* by Du Bois, which crystallized black opposition to Washington's policies, was published.

1909: The NAACP was founded on Lincoln's birthday after a savage Springfield, Ill., lynching and rebellion.

1910: W.E.B. Du Bois started *Crisis* as the official organ of the NAACP.

National Urban League began in New York.

1918: The First Pan-African Congress, led by Du Bois, met in Paris at the same time as the conference which ended World War I.

1920: The national convention of the Universal Negro Improvement Association met in New York City; Marcus Garvey, the founder, advocated his ideas of racial pride and return to Africa. In 1927, Marcus Garvey was deported as an undesirable alien.

1925: The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, an important black labor union, was organized by A. Philip Randolph.

1930: When President Herbert Hoover appointed a known racist judge from North Carolina to the Supreme Court, the NAACP launched a successful campaign against his confirmation.

1931: Nine black youths accused of raping two white women were convicted in Scottsboro, Ala. The case became a cause celebre with Afro-American organizations, liberal whites and the Communist Party.

1933: The NAACP opened its attack on segregation and discrimination in schools. On behalf of Thomas Hocutt, the NAACP sued the University of North Carolina.

1936: Jesse Owens won four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics.

1939: Opera singer Marion Anderson was barred from singing in Constitution Hall in Washington by the Daughters of the American Revolution. Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt resigned in protest from the organization.

1941: President Roosevelt held an urgent meeting with A. Philip Randolph, head of the



Courtesy: SCLC

Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and other black spokespersons and urged them to call off a march against discrimination and segregation in the national defense program. When Randolph refused, Roosevelt issued an executive order forbidding discrimination in defense industries and government training programs. Randolph then called off the march.

1942: Blacks and whites committed to direct nonviolent action organized the Congress of Racial Equality in Chicago.

1944: The Supreme Court, in *Smith v. Allwright*, banned the "white primary," which had effectively prevented blacks in the South from voting.

1947: The Congress of Racial Equality sent Freedom Riders into the South to test the Supreme Court's June, 1946, ban against segregation in interstate bus travel.

1948: Some Southern delegates walked out of the Democratic Convention after a strong civil-rights plank was adopted. South Carolinians and Mississippians led the movement which formed the Dixiecrat Party with Strom Thurmond as the presidential candidate.

President Truman issued an Executive Order declaring equality of treatment and opportunity for all Americans in the armed forces.

1950: The Supreme Court in *McLaurin v. Oklahoma* said once a black student is admitted to a previously all-white school, no distinctions can be made on the basis of race.

1951: A new era of repression began with the bomb-death of Harry T. Moore, a Florida NAACP leader in Mims, Fla.

1953: Blacks protesting discriminatory treatment began a bus boycott in Baton Rouge, La.

1954: The Supreme Court, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, ruled unanimously that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. The historic decision overruled the findings in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and declared that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal.

1955: Rosa Parks, a black seamstress in Montgomery, Ala., refused to surrender her seat when ordered by a local bus driver. Her arrest for violating Jim Crow ordinances led to a city-wide bus boycott by blacks which began on December 5. Despite terrorist attacks, including the bombing of boycott leaders' homes, and legal harassment, massive arrests and civil suits, the boycott continued. On December 13, 1956, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation on public buses in Montgomery was illegal. Martin Luther King emerged as a national leader.

1956: The home of black minister and

civil-rights activist Fred L. Shuttlesworth was bombed in Birmingham, Ala. Local blacks responded with a massive defiance of bus segregation regulations.

1957: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference was organized. Martin Luther King, Jr. was elected president.

Blacks in Tuskegee, Ala., began a boycott of white merchants to protest an act of the state legislature which crushed their incipient political power by gerrymandering them out of the city. The Supreme Court later ruled, in *Gomillion v. Lightfoot* (1960), the gerrymander illegal, and blacks subsequently took political control of the town and Macon Co.

President Eisenhower ordered federal troops into Little Rock to halt interference with court-ordered desegregation.

1959: "Raisin in the Sun," a play depicting a part of black life in the ghetto, by Afro-American playwright Lorraine Hansberry, became a Broadway hit.

The Second "Youth March for Integrated Schools" drew 30,000 students to Washington. Mack Parker was lynched in Poplarville, Miss.

1960: A wave of sit-ins at segregated lunch counters, led by black college students, began in Greensboro, N.C.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was founded.

Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Black Muslims, called for the establishment of an all-black state. Such a state, or group of states, later became a rallying cry for supporters of black nationalism.

1961: A group of white and black youths, sponsored by CORE, set out for a bus trip through the South to test desegregation practices. The Freedom Riders were subjected to beatings, arson and legal harassment.

Violence erupted in Monroe, N.C., when organizers demonstrated against discrimination and for negotiations of a list of community demands. Robert Williams fled the white mob and trumped-up kidnapping charges.

1962: Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black ordered the admission of James Meredith to the University of Mississippi. Riots occurred; federalized national guard troops restored order.

Mass arrests brought the Albany, Ga., struggle against segregation to the world's attention. The following achievements in social relations resulted: (1) agreement by local authorities to form a bi-racial committee on racial problems; (2) desegregation of the city's bus terminal and cafe; (3) release from jail of demonstrators and an end to mass arrests; and (4) the substitution of "Mr. and Mrs." for derogatory terms used by officials.

Racial discrimination in federally financed housing was prohibited by President Kennedy.

1963: Civil-rights forces led by Martin Luther King, Jr., and Fred Shuttlesworth launched a drive against racism in Birmingham. Police, led by Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor, used high-powered water hoses and dogs against demonstrators. The brutality of the repression aroused public opinion, especially in the North. The protests continued until an agreement was signed calling for the gradual desegregation of public accommodations.

Medgar Evers, NAACP field secretary in Mississippi, was assassinated. His assailant was released when his trial ended with a hung jury.

At the largest demonstration in U.S. history, 250,000 blacks and whites gathered in DC to lobby for sweeping civil-rights measures.

Four small black girls were killed when a church was bombed in Birmingham. It was later revealed FBI agents were involved in bombing.

1964: Supreme Court set aside contempt conviction of a black, Mary Hamilton, who did not answer in Alabama court when called "Mary."

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the most far-reaching civil-rights legislation since Reconstruction, was passed.

Civil-rights workers focused on Mississippi in the Freedom Summer project. Shortly after it began, the bodies of Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner were found in a newly built earthen dam near Philadelphia, Miss.

Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party challenged the right of the regular state Democratic Party to represent Mississippi at the Democratic National Convention.

1965: Alabama's voter registration drive developed into a nationwide protest movement. More than 700 protestors were arrested on Feb. 1. On Feb. 26, Jimmy Lee Jackson died of wounds received from state troopers in Marion, Ala. The 50-mile Selma-to-Montgomery march occurred from March 21 to 25. About 50,000 appeared before the Alabama state capitol to denounce state leaders for interfering with voting rights. Viola Liuzzo, a white civil-rights worker from Michigan, was killed on that same night. Three Ku Klux Klansmen were convicted of conspiracy to violate her civil rights.

Malcolm X was assassinated. The 1965 Voting Rights Act was enacted. The most serious single racial disturbance in American history erupted in the "Watts" section of Los Angeles, Cal., following a clash between blacks and white police.

1966: Julian Bond, son of a college president and a leader of SNCC, was denied his seat in the Georgia legislature for opposing U.S. involvement in Vietnam. He was seated in 1967 following a Supreme Court decision.

Stokely Carmichael was elected SNCC chairperson, reflecting SNCC's move to de-emphasize whites' role in civil-rights activities. James Meredith, the student who integrated the University of Mississippi in 1962, was shot in the back shortly after starting his one-man pilgrimage "against fear" from Memphis to Jackson. The march was resumed with Martin Luther King and Stokely Carmichael taking the lead. The demonstration ended with a rally of 15,000 at the state capitol in Jackson. Carmichael and others began to employ the phrase "black power."

Martin Luther King addressed a crowd of 45,000 in Chicago, and launched a drive to rid the nation's third largest city of discrimination. The Black Panther Party was founded in Oakland, Cal. Their 10-point program called for full employment, restitution for past exploitation, education relevant to black needs and aspirations, release of all black prisoners, decent housing, exemptions from military service for blacks, trial of blacks only by black juries, an end to police brutality, and black political and economic power.

Edward Brooke was elected U.S. senator from Massachusetts, becoming the first black

since Reconstruction to sit in the Senate.

1967: Martin Luther King announced unalterable opposition to the Vietnam War. He suggested the avoidance of military service "to all those who find the American course in Vietnam a dishonorable one."

1968: Louis Amerson took over as sheriff of Macon County, Ala., the first black sheriff in the South since Reconstruction.

Three black students died, and several others were wounded, from bullets fired by law enforcement officers during a disturbance on the campus of S.C. State College at Orangeburg.

The Fair Housing Act, prohibiting racial discrimination in the sale and rental of most housing units in the country, was enacted.

Martin Luther King, Jr., addressed a rally of striking garbage workers in Memphis. His assassination on April 4 was followed by a week of rebellion in at least 125 localities.

Ralph Abernathy, successor to King as head of SCLC, led the Poor People's march on Washington, including lobbying and erection of a campsite known as Resurrection City.

While police attacked anti-war protesters outside the Democratic Party Convention in Chicago boasted 337 black delegates - 189 voting, 148 alternates. Rev. Channing E. Phillips and Julian Bond became the first blacks placed in nomination for the presidency and vice-presidency, respectively, of the U.S.

Nine blacks, all Democrats, were elected to the House of Representatives. Shirley Chisholm defeated James Farmer, ex-head of CORE, in the congressional race in Brooklyn to become first black woman elected to the House.

1969: A strike of hospital workers, mostly black women, started in Charleston, S.C., and turned into a major civil-rights movement.

The Dept. of Justice filed its first discrimination suit against a major Southern textile company, charging Cannon Mills with bias in both employment and rental of its housing.

Police killed Fred Hampton, the Illinois chairman of the Black Panther Party, and another Panther leader during a Chicago raid.

1970: The Supreme Court ruled that integration of school districts in six Deep South states must take place by February 1.

School buses bringing black children to a newly integrated school in Lamar, S.C. were attacked by a mob of raging whites. State police used tear gas and clubs to drive the whites back. Several children were injured.

The National Education Association told a Senate committee that 5,000 black teachers and principals in Southern schools had either been dismissed or demoted after desegregation.

1971: White racists attacked the black ghetto in Wilmington, N.C., following school protests.

The Supreme Court reversed Muhammad Ali's conviction for defying the draft.

Seven blacks were fired from the Columbus, Ga., police force after protests about the slaying of a black youth by a white police officer. Remaining black officers vowed to defend the black community from attacks by white cops. When the city refused to reinstate the black cops, a boycott ensued.

Dr. Leon Sullivan was elected to the board of General Motors, the first black to serve as a director of one of the world's largest firms.

1972. The National Black Political Convention in Gary, Ind., refused to back Shirley Chisholm for the presidency, but the convention, attended by nearly 4,000 delegates and thousands of observers, developed a program for black political and economic development.

Black dock workers in Burnside, La., refused to unload a shipload of Rhodesian chrome, enforcing UN sanctions against Rhodesia's illegal white minority regime.

Nine young blacks and one white woman were convicted of firebombing a grocery store in Wilmington, N.C.

1973: 200 Native Americans, joined by SCLC, marched from Robeson Co. to Raleigh, N.C., to demand reservation status for Tuscaroras.

African Liberation Day march and rally attracted more than 40,000 to Washington to demand an end to U.S. corporate exploitation in Southern Africa.

The National Black Network, the nation's first black-owned and -operated news network, began operations.

1974: About 1,700 delegates to the second National Black Political Convention met in Little Rock amid conflict between black nationalist leaders, advocating a separatist approach, and others who favored operating within traditional political structure.

Gov. George Wallace won 25% of the black vote in his victorious bid for a fourth term in Alabama. He stressed "opportunities for all."

The National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression led a demonstration of nearly 4,000 in Raleigh, N.C., to demand release of the Wilmington 10.

A thousand demonstrators marched through downtown Atlanta demanding the ousting of white police chief, John Inman, whom many blacks considered racist.

1975: Jackson, Miss., opened nine new racially integrated public swimming pools, 12 years after it had drained its old pools and closed them rather than desegregate them.

Violence erupted on the second day of the first court-ordered busing of school children between a major city, Louisville, and its suburb, Jefferson Co. Progress in Education led a march and rally of 1,000 people to break the fear developed by anti-busing forces.

5,000 protested South Carolina police killings of blacks during Bloody Summer.

1976: Jimmy Carter was elected president with a victory margin provided by black votes.

1978: Reports revealed the CIA recruited black Americans in the late '60s and early '70s to spy on members of the Black Panther Party, both in the U.S. and Africa.

A Lowndes County, Ala., grand jury indicted former FBI informant Gary Thomas Rowe for the murder of civil-rights worker Viola Liuzzo during the '65 Selma-to-Montgomery march.

1979: The Ku Klux Klan attacked an SCLC march in Decatur, Ala. Two whites and two blacks were wounded in gunfire exchange. 3,000 responded to SCLC's call for another march despite Klan threats of violence.

Five members of the Communist Workers Party were killed by members of the Nazi Party and KKK in Greensboro, N.C. Demonstrations occurred throughout the nation when the Klan and Nazi defendants were acquitted in 1980.

The National Anti-Klan Network brought together 200 organizations in Atlanta to develop strategies to combat escalation of KKK activities, especially KKK-government collusion evidenced by the November 3 massacre in Greensboro.

1980: A rally of 10,000 in Greensboro commemorated the 1960 sit-ins and the killing of five CWP members in Nov. 1979.

Violent protests erupted in Miami after four police officers were acquitted of the December, 1979, beating death of black insurance agent Arthur McDuffie. At least 15 persons were killed, 300 injured and 700 arrested.

Racial tensions occurred in Chattanooga, Tenn., following the acquittal by an all-white jury of two Klansmen and the conviction of three other Klansmen on reduced charges in the shotgun shootings of four black women.

The Court of Appeals in Richmond overturned the Wilmington 10 conviction, saying the 1972 convictions were prejudiced with testimony of state informants whose incentives to testify had not been made known to the jury and the defense lawyers.

Southern
Exposure



Our Promised Land

Speed now the day when the
plans and the hills and all
the wealth thereof shall be
the peoples own

Continued on the 2nd page
Southern Exposure, Winter, 1980

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A SHORT READING LIST

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We shall overcome

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,
We shall overcome someday.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

We are not afraid, we are not afraid

We are not alone

The truth will make us free

We'll walk hand in hand

The Lord will see us through

(the last two lines are the same in every verse)