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CALHOUN ALABAMA \*\* LOWNDES COUNTY \*\* MASS MEETING \*\* April 11th, 1965

Side II:

MOREHOUSE STUDENT MEETING \*\* PROTEST

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SIDE II  
ATLANTA

Student: Taken to Dr. Mays's office today. Office of the President  
Morehouse College  
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Dr. Mays:

We students of Morehouse College, in good standing with the institution do hereby publish and make known our grievances feeling that by so doing they may be made known and our beloved college advanced. Having at heart the progressive and liberal development of our alma mater, we call for the following advances: These advances we feel are in the best interests of the college. And we feel that there is a necessity for some far reaching reforms of the present system. In the established tradition of our nation, and generation we now request and indeed demand that the following matters be examined and/or changed.

--the rule governing admittance to the infirmary and the absence of a full-time psychiatrist

-- \_\_\_\_\_ the question of the weekend ruling.

--compulsory attendance in chapel on Sunday and weekdays

--compulsory class attendance which is not consistent with our honor system

-- open student-faculty parleys be instituted immediately

-- that the rule governing dress standards for sunday meals be examined

--that the selection of merit scholars and exchange students be examined

--the present hour for the breakfast meal be examined

--that the present system of student protection on campus be examined

--that the matter of underpaid student workers be examined

--and the upkeep of campus housing facilities be examined

We are confident that our grievances will be heard and promptly acted upon. And we request that an open forum -- open to administrators, faculty and the students be called within the next week to discuss the aforementioned issues.

Respectfully Yours,

I COULDN'T GET ALL THE NAMES, BUT HERE ARE SOME:

Edmund Gather, Martin \_\_\_\_\_, Edward Johnson, \_\_\_\_\_ lindsley,  
Alfred \_\_\_\_\_, Alfred Pertillo, Robert \_\_\_\_\_.

At the time this letter was presented today, Dr. Mays was not in the office and we did not know his response to the letter. But I'm quite sure that whatever the response is, it will be made known. If not before, by Wednesday's chapel. Cause it's quite apparent that there are a number of people on all of the campuses around here, especially at Morehouse, that are concerned -- either positively or negatively -- with what we are doin'. And what we're trying to do. At this point, and particularly on this particular point, we feel it is necessary to clarify our position. And to let you know exactly what we stand for and what we represent. Now Gather is going to talk to you about the philosophy behind this movement.

Gather: This is really a very simple matter. I need only explain that the motivation behind the ... the motivations that prompted us to make the requests that we did make was that we conceive of education as something much broader than simply learning that Columbus discovered America in 1492. We consider that we think that education had to be characterized by a number of things. For example, that it has to be based on some kind of creative thinking. That it has to be based on free use of the intellect. And we question whether some of the paternalistic inventions that have governed our conduct here do not hinder the free use of the intellect and thereby hinder our own development and hinder the development of our education. We think that it's a part of education to be able to survey your situation, to appraise it and to critisize it. We think that it's alos part of your education to be able to choose on the basis of your own thinking. Because we think that it's important and because we think that it's a vital part of the whole process of getting a college education that you be able to choose; we are forced to take the position that when a student comes to an institution and surrenders his right to make simple choices like whether he feels like putting on a tie or not that

there is something here said about his intellect. About his ability to survey his own situation. In other words, we don't think this is a grammar school. We don't think it's a kindergarten where children have to be brought and dressed and taken to the rest room and otherwise treated as if they were unable to think and reason on their own. We think that this ought to be a university center where people learn to think first. And because they think, they learn to discriminate. And because they can discriminate, they can choose. To be educated is to be able to make choices; to decide. What we're doing is we're defending the position of every student to decide with his own brain about what he will do and what he will not do. The speakers who will follow me are gonna take up the same theme that I've given to you. The theme of your freedom., and the assertion of that freedom. So, I don't think it would make any sense for me to explain my position any more. The central point is that you don't have an education if you can't choose. Thank you.

Student: As Mr. Gathen said, the remaining speeches (if we can properly call them that) will revolve around this basic issue of freedom to choose and the right to be people. Eddie Johnson's gonna speak to you now.

Johnson: Those of you that were here last Friday know or are quite aware of what we are movin' for, or towards. We have come here a little more serious, a little less optimistic, but more determined to protest the students in this university center. The seriousness of this protest revolved around the question that challenges the power structure and the status quo. This challenges the power structure to the extent that they are not willing to give us our rights to choose. And the only way power can exist in such a situation is to keep the students from thinking. As long as we don't think about these questions; as long as we don't protest against these situations; the power structure can demand and manipulate us as students. The power structure can uphold the status quo. The seriousness of this movement also challenges the thought of the studnet. The moment you protest, the moment you demand

certain rights, you are in jeopardy. That is, jeopardy of your education. A lot of us have come out ~~at~~ the exposure of being sent away by -- let's say some faction of the power structure that would deny us this right of protest. The implications of this movement is not to denounce the administration nor to denounce the faculty, but the implication of this movement is to enable the students to voice their concern about policies and regulations that dictate our lives in this university center. There are possibly three questions that have come into your minds during the weekend, after Friday's meeting. Or, I should say, three questions that have come into my mind also and that is: who do we represent?  
what do we represent?  
Why are we protesting?

We represent the voice of discontent in the entire student body. We represent the challenge of policies, regulations and rules that influence our lives. All of us as students have felt this way sometime. It is only that those of us who are standing here voicing now are speaking them and feeling them. What we represent is the growing concern of students everywhere in the university centers concerning their lives, the policies and regulations that govern their lives. Education is far more than just training us to be placed in jobs or systematic organizations which do not require our greatest ability of thinking, and the greatest ability and the greatest development of the training heretofore, as we're being educated as students. The time has come. We are protesting. The time has come we want to be given responsibility due as students and individuals of this university center. We want to have a voice in the policies \_\_\_\_\_ and regulate our lives. And we want to destroy the strong ties of paternalism which denies us the freedom and the right of adulthood and the rights as students and individuals in this university center. APPLAUSE Again this Friday, we come before you asking, <sup>will</sup> begging, demanding ~~for~~ you protest against the policies which deny us the rights as students. Will you protest against the regulations and rules which

deny us the responsibilities as individuals? I am asking you that we together stand up with one voice and as one body to show the administration that we're now concerned to deal with the policies which affect our lives. Are we ready to demand our rights? Are we ready to demand our freedom? Are we ready to demand our responsibilities? If we are, if we are, then let me hear you say yes we are.

All: Yes!!!

Student: We will listen to Bob Terrell now.

Terrell: A lot of people have misconceptions of just what we are and what we're asking for. And they don't really think we're serious. They think that something's behind us. Everybody's waiting. They think we have a gimmick. We have no gimmick. We just have a program. And I'm going to try to elaborate on that program and to remove any misconceptions that any of you might have concerning that program. I'm gonna speak on three things specifically. And those are: compulsory chapel attendance, compulsory classes attendance and dress standards. In relation to compulsory chapel attendance. We're looking at this in two lights. That is your daily chapel and that is your Sunday chapel. We think that we could abolish compulsory attendance at both of these. And this is not to say that we want to abolish chapel and that nobody should go to chapel any longer. This is not what we're asking. We're saying that students should have the right to go to chapel if they want to or to refuse to go to chapel if they want to. Now, presently, the speakers aren't interested in the chapels. The students aren't interested in the chapels. And as a result, chapels have become dysfunctional. And the only thing they serve to do now is to give out announcements. And they hurt students averages in terms of the dean takin' hours from them. This is unnecessary. As the chapels stand now, they are unnecessary and dysfunctional. Now, we feel that if the chapel was voluntary, that students have the right to go if they wanted to and not go if they wanted

in turn, better speakers would stimulate the student. So therefore, the students would go to chapel, if the speakers were good. And as a result, we would gain; the speakers would gain; and Morehouse would gain. This is what we want. We want the college to be a better place. Now, in terms of Sunday chapel, I think you all agree that each individual should have the right to worship whenever, however and wherever he or she desires. Now, we feel that our basic rights and intelligence as students and citizens are being usurped by the faculty when they tell us that you have to come to chapel; you have to worship when we worship, how we whoship and as we want you to worship. We feel that this is wrong. And we are here today to protest against these type practices. Now, in terms of compulsory dress standards on Sunday. Or compulsory dress standards anytime -- we're against them. We feel that students should have the right to dress how they want to, when they want to, where they want to. We feel that we have the intelligence and we know how to dress at certain occasions. The faculty has taken a paternalistic attitude towards you and telling you that you don't know how to dress. You're from the country to a large extent, and we need to instruct you as to how to dress and how to act. We don't think that this is necessary. And this is hurting the college. Now, in terms of compulory class attendance -- some of the classes around here are terrible. And I want you to recognize the fact that I say some of them. That does not mean all of them. We're asking that compulsory class attendance be abolished. And that students have the right to go to class when they want to, if the class is stimulatin', and not go if the class is not stimulating and the teacher is not teaching anything. Now, some people say that if you abolish compulsory class attendance, the students won't go. We disagree. We feel that if compulsory class attendance is abolished, the teachers are going to have to prepare themselves. They're going to have to prepare in terms of stimulating these students to come to classes. They're

to, and the faculty really wanted chapel, it would get better speakers. In turn, better speakers would stimulate the student. So therefore, the students would go to chapel, if the speakers were good. And as a result, would gain; the speakers would gain; and Morehouse would gain. This is what we want. We want the college to be a better place. Now, in terms of Sunday chapel, I think you all agree that each individual should have the right to worship whenever, however and wherever he or she desires. Now, we feel that our basic rights and intelligence as students and citizens are being usurped by the faculty when they tell us that you have to come to chapel; you have to worship when we worship, how we worship and as we want you to worship. We feel that this is wrong. And we are here today to protest against the type practices. Now, in terms of compulsory dress standards on Sunday. Compulsory dress standards anytime -- we're against them. We feel that students should have the right to dress how they want to, when they want to, where they want to. We feel that we have the intelligence and we know how to dress at certain occasions. The faculty has taken a paternalistic attitude toward you and telling you that you don't know how to dress. You're from the country to a large extent, and we need to instruct you as to how to dress and how to act. We don't think that this is necessary. And this is hurting the college. Now, in terms of compulsory class attendance -- some of the classes around here are terrible. And I want you to recognize the fact that I say some of them. That does not mean all of them. We're asking that compulsory class attendance be abolished. And that students have the right to go to class when they want to, if the class is stimulating, and not go if the class is not stimulating and the teacher is not teaching anything. Now, some people say that if you abolish compulsory class attendance, the students won't go. I disagree. We feel that if compulsory class attendance is abolished, the teachers are going to have to prepare themselves. They're going to have to prepare in terms of stimulating these students to come to classes. The

going to have to give material that is so important and so mentally and academically stimulating that students are gonna have to be there in order to pass. And I think that we're all interested in becoming educated and passing our courses. Now, some people say, and a faculty member said to us yesterday, they said: you're not making a distinction between benevolent and despotic paternalism. And he said: Although these schools and Morehouse in particular have a paternalistic atmosphere and attitude toward the student body, it's all right because it's benevolent. But we say to you that paternalism is not good. I don't care what kind you have. Thank you.

Student: I don't know if you've been concerned with what the people were saying before, but our next speaker's gonna speak on an issue that I think all of you should be concerned with. This is a matter of the practices in the different infirmaries. He's speaking particularly about Morehouse's and I think it's generally true of Spellman's. This man has personal experience that he will relate to you also. E.J. Prisket.

Prisket: Three topics that I'd like to discuss. One: the infirmary being open at all hours. Number two: the fact that teachers have too many hours and are overworked. And number three: Our hope for an open forum between faculty, administrators and students. First of all, I'd like to share an experience with you that I had in regard to the infirmary. I'm an asthmatic. And one time about 12 o'clock, I got sick. So I kind of hobbled my way down to the infirmary and pant-pant-pant trying to make it, you know. And I knocked on the door and I said: pant-pant-pant, I'm sick. And the lady looks at me; she says: this is not the visiting hour. I said: But lady, I'm sick. You know, I'm kind of dying -- I'm scared, I'm wheezing more, I'm breathing harder. And she tells me that these aren't the visiting hours. Now, our position on this statement, and our philosophy concernin' this is that your body, when you get ill, when you get sick, it doesn't have -- it doesn't know anything about visiting hours. "hen I'm half dyin', I'm

not concerned about visiting hours. I think all of our concern is that when you are sick, when you do have problems, you can go to someplace where you're taken care of. Our second part concerning the practice of the infirmary and the reason that we're asking for an psychiatrist is that -- not so much that people are goin' crazy. But the type of period and the age in which we live, one of the things that is characteristic of our period is pressure. We got pressure from home. We got pressure interacting between girls and boys. You got pressure mentally. You got pressure trying to make it. You're trying to make it. You got pressure from all sides. And at some point or other, each of us has been at a point where you want to talk to somebody or you wanted to confide in somebody. And say: Look here, baby, I'm having these problems. Talk to me. This is what we want. This is our philosophy behind this thing. The second point that: the fact that there are teachers that are carrying too many hours. I think is a direct connection between the type of education that we receive as students. And the connection that I think I see, and I think that our movement seems to feel exists, is that if a teacher has too many classes, you start wearing yourself thin. And if he has 5 or 6 classes, the amount of time that you would spend -- say on the difference between the amount of time that you would spend on 6 classes and say 3 classes is that you gotta do a little bit of work for one class, a little bit of work for the second, a little bit of work for the third. And none of the work is really efficient. None of the work goes into depth. You talk about Morehouse being the pride of the South. And you talk about competition with Harvard and school like this. One of the things that I think makes the difference is not so much that they have more equipment and stuff, but it's the relation between the teacher and the student. The fact that your assignments are in depth. The fact that your assignments make you go to the library, make you look up background, make you look up the different positions. There's not one position. One of

the things that history teaches is that there's not the answer. There are many answers. There are many approaches. And if we don't know these answers and don't know how to find them, then if we start competing, we start relating to the world, we'll find that we're not together. You talk about being together in terms of talking to a girl. Talk about being together -- cat has a fine car. Let's talk about the togetherness of studying. Being a scholar. (APPLAUSE) The first thing that we have to push for is an open forum between faculty, administrators and teachers. And the philosophy behind is that our belief in this thing called democratic process. But the way decisions should be made is that if I have a steak in the decision is that I should have a hand in ~~this~~ deciding what happens. An example of that that happened nationally was the civil rights movement where Gov. Johnson and President Johnson decided what was to happen to the civil rights workers in a meeting at the White House. And the reason I was particularly concerned was 'cause I was in Mississippi at the time. And I was the one being affected. And I was the one bein' bombed and shot at. And, the situation in a sense, is just as true at Morehouse. You're not bein' killed physically. But, mentally, when you start someptin' and you're not ready, you just as dead as if somebody killed you. And the reason we want to have an open forum is that we don't want ~~to~~ to have to have it said that a few people made the decisions. That a few people got together in that office and said: this is what's gonna be; and this is it; and this is what's gonna happen. We want everybody to have a chance -- an equal chance -- laying stress on that word equal. The type of \_\_\_\_\_ that we would like to have is that nobody from Dr. Mays to a freshman has more say than anybody else. That we have to observe parliamentary procedure in speaking at that just if he's Dr. Mays or Mr. Himmelson or whoever it be, he doesn't get a say more than anybody else. The one thing that's supposed to be true about us all is that we're supposed to be people. And that being people

we have opinions. We have the right /to express them. And one of the things that death teaches us is that no man -- no man -- is any better than anybody else. And so, why don't we realize it in life. That each person should have the right to express himself. He has the right to say: well, I don't like this or I like this or I'd like to see this looked at. And this is what we're trying to do. And this is what we asked for in the letter.

APPLAUSE.

Student: I'd like to make a general announcement to the effect that in the next / two or three days, a newsletter will be coming out from SLF -- that subversive organization -- that group of trouble makers -- explaining our position and what we stand for. Also, I'd like to entertain the group questions and reactions that you have to what has been said here today. Ask your reactions to the literature that you've seen from SLF. Now, are there any questions ~~me~~ or are there any statements generally speaking? (someone evidently has asked a question. The same student answers): We plan to draft that to the faculty members. Another point that I'd like to make is that I notice that we have a very, very, very, very good representation from Spellman today. I take it those girls are satisfied with \_\_\_\_\_. Are there any questions because, listen, we want you to raise your questions now. Because in the past we've heard that some discontent or some dissention has been goin' around or questions are being raised between students in the dormitories. And we want to know what these questions are. I mean, this is not just me and Al and Bob standin' up here. This is you, too. So, ask these questions. Yes? The question was whether the movement has been substantially crippled by what was said in chapel this morning. It is the feeling of the group that the movement was helped. Was anyone in chapel? I am committed to my action, so I wasn't in chapel. Was anyone in chapel today? Barry Ganter can tell you what he said.

Ganter: This is what Walker said in chapel this morning. He said that he was curious as to whether this group had a political interest in the upcoming student government elections. And I suppose that would be interpreted as a threat to some of the political blocks on campus. But he later said that the only thing that he was really concerned with was that he thought that the approach had not been the best approach. I think that was the position that he ended up with. There were some other things said, but I think they all take a backseat to his objection to the general approach.

Questioner: What's his objection to the approach?

Ganter: Well, the objection was that the approach was not channeled first of all, directly through the Studnet Governemnt.

Questioner: I thought Friday someone said that David Walker made a statement to the effect that he was in sympathy with the group cause he had tried and he hadn't been successful so he was turnin' it over to you. Is that true?

Participant: Some people reserve the right to change their minds.

Ganter: All of us know that the majority of the things that we're asking for here today are not new things. And I've been here for 2 years. And I know that for 2 years, the Student Governemnt association has been trying to get these things. And I know that once a month, every month, nine months a year, that the Student Government Association goes into the banquet room at Morehouse college and talks over these same grievances with the faculty. I also know I was at a meetin' with Jack (he repedly miscalls David Jack\*) last Friday afternoon. And we told Jack Walker who we were, what we were and what we were trying to do. And Jack walker saidx And I'll tell him to his face -- David Walker -- : that I agree with what you're tryin' to do. We've been tryin' to do it ourselves. And I'm behind you as long as you're responsible. I also know that Jack walker had a meeting yesterday at 2:30 And that this morning, he came out and made a 180 degree turn, from what

he said to us Friday. Now, we're levelling with you. We got all our cards on the table. And this is what happened. You make decisions as to why he did it or what he \_\_\_\_\_.

Spellman girl: For girls  $\neq$  from Spellman who don't go along with the rules over there -- what do we do? We just come and join you? Or do we form a group of our own?

Student: The question was whether the girls from Speallman who are dis-satisfied with their  $\neq$  rules and regualtions: do they join us? Or do they form their own movement? They form their own organization. And from this organization, we can form a colaiton. But the thing is that whatever happens at Spelman has to come from Spelman. And whatever movement gets started at Spelman has to be initiated at Spelman. I don't go to Spelman. I don't think I ever will. I can't do it. I sympathize with you and I would give you my support. And we are -- I think that SLF is willing to give you our support. Because I am affected by some of the '!' \_\_\_\_\_ at Spelman. Are there any more questions? Look for the Newsletter!!!

Thank you very much

Freedom Singers singing